

MARATHON

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First hint of 'feel-good' factor

Tories given glimmer of hope by poll

By PETER RIDDELL

PEOPLE have at last started to feel more optimistic about the economic outlook and are more positive about John Major than at any time for three years, according to the latest MORI poll for *The Times*.

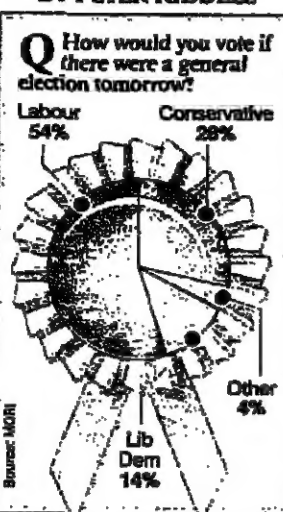
But the shift in attitude has not yet changed voting intentions or the expectation of big Conservative losses in next week's council elections.

The poll, conducted last weekend, shows that support for the Tories remained at 28 per cent over the past month, Labour slipped three points to 54 per cent — its lowest level since September — while the Liberal Democrats are up a point at 14 per cent.

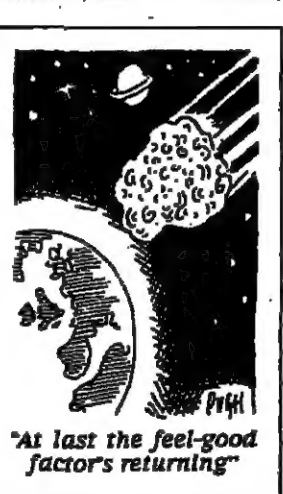
MORI has for the first time this month listed the Referendum Party in its voting intentions question, but only six people said they planned to vote for it, too few to register in the percentage shares.

Tory strategists will be pleased as the first real sign of the 'feel-good' factor that has remained elusive in spite of the evidence of economic growth. The MORI economic optimism index has improved sharply to its highest level since November 1994. Many of those interviewed will have just noticed the Budget tax cuts in their pay packets and benefited from recent mortgage rate cuts.

The index, measuring those who think that the country's general economic condition will improve rather than get worse, has been in the range of minus 17 to minus 19 points since last summer, but has now improved to minus six.



Mr Major's personal rating has also improved to its best level since January 1993. While many more people are still dissatisfied with the way he is doing his job as Prime Minister than are satisfied,



the gap is now minus 33 points. This compares with minus 39 at the end of March and minus 50 last year.

Approval for Mr Major among Tory supporters has also improved to plus 39, around the peak levels touched only a couple of times since 1993.

Disapproval of the way the Government is running the country has also dropped a little from previous very high levels. Nonetheless, by a five-to-one margin, people are dissatisfied rather than satisfied with the Government.

The poll offers at most a glint of hope for the Tories. But they will remain cautious until there is evidence of a pick-up in the party's rating, especially after raising expectations before the Staffordshire South-East by-election which turned into one of their worst defeats.

The drop in the Labour rating is not yet significant. Tony Blair's personal rating has fallen a little, but is still higher than for the other two party leaders. Half the public are satisfied with the way he is doing his job, with 28 per cent dissatisfied. Moreover, Labour supporters approve of his performance by more than five-to-one.

Paddy Ashdown retains a positive rating, among both the public as a whole and Liberal Democrat supporters.

MORI interviewed 1,947 adults at 146 points across Britain from April 19 to 22. Voting intention figures exclude those who say they would not vote (10%), are undecided (7%) or refused to say (3%).



Collision course: an artist's impression, using computer simulation, of an asteroid passing close to Earth

Eros has blind date with Earth

By NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

AN ASTEROID twice the size of the one that killed the dinosaurs could be on a collision course with the Earth.

Should Eros, a chunk of rock nearly 15 miles long, hit us, the effect would be catastrophic. When an object half as big hit the Earth 65 million years ago, it created a huge crater and hurled so much debris into the atmosphere that the climate was changed, vegetation died, and the dinosaurs disappeared.

Panic would be premature, however. There is "no significant danger" that Eros will collide with us in the next 100,000 years. On a much longer time scale, however, such an impact is quite likely.

The calculations have been made by an Italian-French team, led by Dr Paolo Farinelli of the University of Pisa. Working out the future movements of asteroids is not entirely straightforward because on a prolonged timescale they are chaotic — tiny changes in starting conditions can make a big difference to the end result.

Close encounters with other planets, including Mars, can alter the orbits and inexact knowledge of what the orbit is makes long-term prediction impossible. Even the computer programme used to make the calculations can affect the result.

So the team, reporting in *Nature*, has not attempted an

exact prediction but has used two different computers to simulate a range of eight possible evolutions of the orbit of Eros.

Over the next 100,000 years or so all these simulations show Eros behaving normally, its orbit crossing that of Mars but not coming worryingly close to Earth. But over longer times, three of the eight orbits simulated do evolve into Earth-crossers and one produces a collision with the Earth just over one million years from now.

"Although our simulations indicate no significant danger of a catastrophic impact by this large, near-Earth asteroid during the next 100,000 years, such a collision is likely in the

far future" the researchers conclude.

Eros is the largest of the near-Earth asteroids, going around the Sun on an elliptical path whose closest approach to the Earth's orbit is 14 million miles, and whose most distant is 72 million miles. A spacecraft called Near — Near Earth Asteroid Rendezvous — is now on its way to Eros, and will go into orbit around it in 1999.

Launched at a cost of \$122 million (\$82 million), Near should tell us a great deal about asteroids in general and Eros in particular.

The US space agency NASA chose Eros, not because it is a threat, but because it is relatively easy to reach.

100 Tories revolt against divorce reforms

By JILL SHERMAN AND ALICE THOMSON

MORE than a hundred Tory MPs, including 16 ministers and whips, voted against the Lord Chancellor's divorce reforms last night.

In one of the biggest revolts against an important element of the Conservative programme, the Government had to rely on Labour to get its proposals through.

Within minutes of the free vote on whether the concept of fault should be scrapped in divorce proceedings, two former ministers had called for progress on the Family Reform Bill to be reconsidered.

John Patten the former Education Secretary claimed that Lord Mackay of Clashfern's proposals were now in Labour's hands and would get through only with its backing. "I have never known the Government's Bill to be at the mercy of the opposition party," he said. "It would be wise to halt progress on the Bill now and reflect whether it is wise to continue."

And the former Chief Whip Michael Jopling said: "Well over 100 MPs on the government's side voted against what is the guts of the Bill. I ask the Leader of the House, when things have cooled down and the dust has settled, that he and his colleagues must reconsider whether they should proceed or not with the Bill."

Ministers and whips who voted for an amendment to keep the concept of fault included John Birt, Simon Burns, James Clappison, Derek Conway, David Davis, Dr Liam Fox, John Horan, Tim Kirkhope, David Maclean, Patrick McLoughlin, Tom Sackville, Iain Sprouat, John Watts, Ann Widdecombe and David Willets. They were joined by Michael Trend and

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PLO ends fight against Israel

The Palestine Liberation Organisation has declared an end to its 32-year armed struggle against Israel, voting to drop from its charter all references to the destruction of the Jewish state. A spokesman said the PLO parliament-in-exile had voted 504 in favour of amending the charter, with 54 voting against.

Hezbollah fights on, page 16

Clinton threat to Sinn Fein

President Clinton is expected to sever relations with Gerry Adams if the IRA refuses to resume its ceasefire and disqualifies Sinn Fein from all-party talks. Mr Adams yesterday confirmed that Sinn Fein will contest the Northern Ireland elections. Page 2

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Major says pulling out of EU is 'cloud-cuckoo-land'

By PHILIP WEBSTER, POLITICAL EDITOR, AND JAMES LANDALE

JOHN MAJOR yesterday told politicians pressing for withdrawal from the European Union that they were living in cloud-cuckoo-land.

However he responded to the rising tide of public and media disaffection with Brussels by signalling a hardening of British attitudes within the EU.

He delivered his sharpest warning yet that he will use the British veto if he fails to get his way in the current inter-governmental conference (IGC) on Europe's future, said that he was looking for an EU constructed in Britain's image, and hinted at a policy of non-co-operation if it continues to try to impose the Social Chapter in Britain by the backdoor.

Mr Major's delicate attempt to answer the growing threat posed by Sir James Goldsmith's Referendum Party

while reassuring Tory critics that he will fight any further moves towards integration came as John Redwood, the former Tory leadership challenger, met Sir James to warn him that he was in danger of splitting the Euro-sceptic vote and letting in a federalist Labour Party.

Mr Redwood, as he had expected, failed to persuade Sir James not to put up candidates against the Tories, although the two men found they shared a broad measure of agreement about the kind of Europe they want to see.

Mr Major, in his speech to the Institute of Directors, was trying to contain the growing demands for withdrawal while satisfying the clamour, intensified since the best crisis erupted, from within the Tory party, MPs and some of his Cabinet for him to take a

stand. His first intention was to kill the idea that there is any alternative for Britain to full membership. He spoke of the hard-headed benefits Britain had gained and said it was naive wrong and damaging to suggest that the choice for Britain was to go along with every demand its partners made or "head for the exit."

Anyone who seriously thought of leaving should explain what that meant for inward investment and the impact on the City, he said.

"Some suggest we could just negotiate a trading relationship with Europe. But frankly the idea that if we were outside

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Lang puts block on electricity takeovers

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY

TWO takeover bids which would have revolutionised Britain's electricity industry were blocked yesterday by the Government.

Ian Lang, the Trade and Industry Secretary, said the bids by two generating companies would be detrimental to competition. His decision has blocked the £25 billion purchase of Southern Electric, the company serving the south of England, by generator National Power, and the £1.9 billion takeover bid by PowerGen of Midlands Electricity.

A billion pounds was wiped off the value of the privatised electricity companies after the ruling. Southern Electric lost £200 million from its value with shares falling 79p to 824p. Midlands Electricity lost £157 million when its shares fell 41p to 370p.

In taking the decision, Mr

Lang overturned a Monopolies and Mergers Commission report.

One of the reasons for splitting the industry at the sell-off six years ago was to introduce more competition and bring down the price to the customer. However, domestic consumers have benefited only marginally, while shareholders have seen their holdings soar and have received a stream of special payments from a cash-rich industry which has shed more than 43,000 jobs since privatisation. Controversy over the planned takeovers heightened last week when Southern Company, a giant American utility, said that it was interested in merging with National Power.

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Stock market, page 28

£72m bill for rail-link before work begins

By JONATHAN PRYNN
TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

THE Government has paid £72 million in fees to consultants, bankers and lawyers for advice on the Channel Tunnel rail link, even though building work starts only next spring.

In all 74 firms have been hired by the Government since 1992. Labour said yesterday it was "incredible" so much taxpayers' money had been

spent before a yard of the 66-mile high-speed link was built. Glenda Jackson, the party's London Transport spokeswoman, said: "Once again, taxpayers' money has been finding its way to the coffers of companies with links to the Tory party. This can only add to the aura of sleaze surrounding this blighted administration."

The contract to build the line, expected to open in 2002, was awarded in February to London & Continental

Railways, a consortium including Richard Branson's Virgin Group and National Express. It will receive a £1.4 billion Treasury subsidy. Advisory work was commissioned by Union Railways, a government-owned company responsible to date for planning and managing the £3 billion project.

Tory MPs who advised companies involved include Sir Edward Heath, the former Prime Minister, David Howell, a Transport Secretary during

the 1980s, and Eric Pickles, a party vice-chairman. Lord Parkinson, also once Transport Secretary, has chaired one company. The names were disclosed in the 1995 register of members' interests, but it is not known if the links still existed when contracts were awarded.

The rail link will enable Eurostar trains to go at 186mph in England, saving 30 minutes on journeys between London and Paris.

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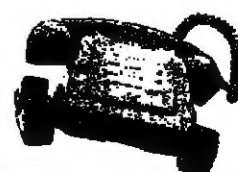
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Tory Broad Church celebrates meaningless ritual

What sort of MPs do we have? Splashed across the pages of most of our newspapers yesterday morning was the story of a Nottingham school's attempt to expel a violent young troublemaker, Richard Wilding. By coincidence, yesterday afternoon featured an hour of questions to the Education Secretary. Some could have been used by MPs to raise that issue. But did any Tory or Labour backbencher mention Wilding? Did the Opposition front bench ask about him?

Not a peep. Possibly MPs simply forgot about it. The scope and level of discussion in these dog-days of a political dynasty is pitiful, and growing more so. The Government is jumpy and defensive, the Opposition terrified of serious debate.



MATTHEW PARRIS
POLITICAL SKETCH

The only other subject the Tories wanted to discuss was Harriet Harman's and Tony Blair's choices of schools for their children. This, too, had nothing to do with any of the questions, but successive members slipped in their weary jibes regardless.

On Labour's side, the tone is grindingly negative. You get no sense of belief in something better or enthusiasm for new ideas, just a constant, carping insistence that to every problem there is a Tory cause. Labour dare not even talk about spending these days.

The Liberal Democrats were locked in a venomous internal dispute between David Alton (Lib Dem, Liverpool Mossley Hill) and the party's education spokesman, Don Foster. Mr Alton, a Christian of the toxic tendency, has accused Mr Foster of saying he wants to abolish religious schools and school worship. Mr Foster, a careerist of the bland tendency, insists he said no such thing. Liberal Democrats, when they fight each other, fight like weasels in a sack. Yesterday the Tories had fun prodding the sack.

One turned in despair to the text of the Prime Minister's speech that morning to the Institute of Directors. It is difficult to work out what this speech means. Instead of sitting on the fence in the time-honoured way, Mr Major has taken to hopping rapidly backwards and forwards from one side of the fence to the other, the overall impression being of an ambiguous blur, like a hummingbird's wings. Thus the foD speech could be intoned by two choirs, in the way of the verses and responses in a High Church service. Eurosceptics could take one part, Europhiles the counterpart.

Our psalm is taken from the text of that foD speech. It should be chanted in plain-song. In each section an oblique stroke is used to indicate a changed note: the first down, the second up. "We are in Europe and we all know we are staying in Europe."

Amnesty on guns will last a month

A firearms amnesty is to be held in June to capitalise on public revulsion after the Dunblane massacre. People handing in illegal weapons at police stations will not be prosecuted unless it can be proved the weapons have been used in criminal activity.

A £75,000 publicity campaign will herald the launch of the amnesty, running from June 3 to June 30 in England, Wales and Scotland. It will not operate in Northern Ireland.

Teachers to strike
Twenty teachers at Glaisdale comprehensive school in Nottinghamshire are to begin an indefinite strike tomorrow to avoid teaching Richard Wilding, 13, who has returned after being expelled for allegedly threatening staff and attacking pupils.

Labour tax row
The accountants KPMG cancelled seminars on Labour's tax plans after claims by Gordon Brown they were "peddling rumours and lies". KPMG said: "Misreporting of these seminars has distorted their content. The firm has and always will be apolitical."

Drug girl, 12
A 12-year-old girl at Dame Allan's independent school in Newcastle upon Tyne has been accused of selling marijuana to another pupil. The head teacher said yesterday: "I am conducting an inquiry to find out who was involved."

Rape awards
Two prostitutes who brought the first successful private prosecution for rape have been awarded compensation of £5,000 each. The Crown Prosecution Service had said there was insufficient evidence to prosecute the man, from Margate, Kent.

Stalker struck off
A German doctor who stalked the Princess of Wales was struck off the medical register for drug abuse. Dr Klaus Wagner, 37, of Stratford, east London, prescribed himself "litres" of morphine-based drugs.

Boy, 14, is held
A boy aged 14 was arrested in connection with the killing of a 17-year-old supermarket worker. The victim, Andrew Weighell, died of a skull fracture after being hit with a golf club on a playing field at Redcar, on Teesside.

X-ray protest
The Royal College of Radiologists said "scaremongering" in a Panorama programme on X-rays had led to patients cancelling treatments. A programme spokeswoman said: "What is wrong with letting people know of a small risk?"

Accountant wins
Stewart Harries, 35, a chartered accountant in London unfairly dismissed after refusing to hide income irregularities for the German-owned Siemens engineering firm, was awarded £15,000 by an industrial tribunal.

Clinton ready to ditch Adams over ceasefire

BY MARTIN FLETCHER AND PHILIP WEBSTER



Clinton: felt betrayed by Docklands bomb

PRESIDENT CLINTON is expected to sever relations with Gerry Adams if the IRA refuses to resume its ceasefire and disqualifies Sinn Féin from all-party talks on Northern Ireland's future. Highly placed sources say that the Sinn Féin president has been left in no doubt that the policy of the American Administration towards his party will change dramatically if it declines to participate in the next stage of a peace process in which Mr Clinton has invested much.

Mr Adams confirmed yesterday as expected that Sinn Féin will contest the elections in Northern Ireland to be held next month, but again gave no hint that a new ceasefire was likely. The SDLP also announced it would field candidates, clearing the way to a poll on May 30. Mr Clinton, who felt betrayed by the IRA bomb in London's Docklands after his decision to see Mr Adams during his visit to Belfast last November, is said to be ready to cut him adrift if he lets him down again.

The Administration believes Sinn Féin should be allowed to return to talks if the ceasefire returns, even if the announcement comes only days before the projected starting date for discussions of June 10. Mr Clinton wants the talks to go ahead without Sinn Féin if the ceasefire is not resumed.

While Mr Adams has a few weeks of his existing US visa to run, future applications would be likely to be rejected. "If Mr Adams becomes a pariah on the international stage then so be it," a senior source has said. Mr Clinton is continuing to take a keen interest in the peace process and has had a stream of meetings with Northern Ireland politicians. At his recent talks with Tony Blair he made a point of congratulating him on maintaining support for the Government's line. Opinion in the White House has been hardening sharply against Sinn Féin since it renewed its campaign of violence. It believes the IRA should have resumed its ceasefire after Mr Major and John Bruton agreed a timetable for elections and all-party talks.

Brussels demands action by Britain to curb BSE

BY CHARLES BREMMER, PHILIP WEBSTER AND MICHAEL HORNSBY

THE European Commission told Britain yesterday that time was running out for it to produce a firm plan for eradicating "mad cow" disease if it wanted EU farm ministers to ease the beef ban next week. Jacques Santer, the Commission President, was reported by his spokesman to have sent a message to John Major urging him "to avoid the situation where the Commission and member states receive imprecise and unwritten indications too late" for next Monday's meeting.



Sir James: refused to give up challenge to Tories

Major warning

Continued from page 1
the EU we could somehow become a trading haven on the edge of Europe with all the benefits of that vital market of 370 million, while others fix the rules without any regard at all to our national self-interest. It is cloud-cuckoo-land."

However, for much of his speech the Prime Minister set out his determination "passionately" to reject the centralising aims of some of his partners. "At Maastricht I said no to policies I thought would be damaging. If I had not won on those issues there would have been no treaty."

On the IGC we have set out our position. Nothing can be imposed on us in the IGC unless we agree. If it is not in our interest I won't agree. I will just say no."

He said that Britain aimed to "build a Europe that is more in our image." He said: "If we win the arguments to build a Europe of nation states, all of Europe will benefit. If others choose to go in a direction that we reject they need to recognise that we will stand our ground and will not follow them. The Europe that evolves will be flexible — and will need to be — to recognise and accommodate our national interest and beliefs as well as theirs."

He added that he had told his partners that they must stop trying to get round the Social Chapter opt-out by trying to impose provisions such as the maximum 48 hour week by other means. Mr Redwood and Sir James met for 50 minutes at the Dorchester Hotel in London. Afterwards Mr Redwood said: "I haven't managed to persuade him to back the Conservative Party as the best way of achieving the kind of Europe we both want."

"But I still think it would be better if Sir James's candidates were withdrawn from the Conservative Party's point of view because then there is no uncertainty." Sir James agreed that they had been "broadly speaking" in agreement although not in "total harmony". He said: "John Redwood and I have broadly similar positions on the type of Europe we want to see but the Referendum Party has only one objective and that is to have a referendum."



Redwood: failed to get deal on election tactics

Although he made clear that the challenge to the Tories would continue, he indicated that he might not put up a candidate against Mr Redwood. Mr Redwood would, however, have to back a full referendum on whether Britain should be run by Brussels or Westminster, and not just on the narrower issue of a single currency.

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Divorce revolt

Continued from page 1
Dame Angela Rumbold, both Tory vice-chairmen, and at least 17 parliamentary private secretaries. The amendment, put forward by the former Trade Minister Edward Leigh, was nevertheless defeated by 267 votes to 137.

Business managers were expecting an even bigger revolt on the second free vote last night to extend the cooling-off period for divorce from a year to 18 months. The Lord Chancellor has argued in favour of keeping to the 12-month period but is said to be relaxed about extending it slightly.

Tony Blair voted in favour of removing fault from the divorce process and was intending to back the 12-month cooling-off period. However, his aides said that he intended to back an amendment during later stages of the Bill for a mandatory reconciliation period.

Before the vote, Tory backbenchers voiced concerns that the reforms, which had a stormy passage through the Lords, would encourage rather than prevent family breakdown. Mr Leigh urged the Government to scrap the idea of no-fault divorce after a year, saying Parliament should lay down a moral cornerstone for marriage partners.

Dame Angela Rumbold, said that the Bill should concentrate on making the marriage contract more solid, not less. "Is the message we really want to give to the nation that these marriage vows mean nothing?" But the solicitors' Family Law Association welcomed the vote, describing it as useful in reducing antagonism.

Debate, page 9

5 things you didn't know about life after death.

1. The average "breadwinner" is insured for only 2 years' earnings.
2. The average man who worked the policy covers the house but will rarely provide for the family.
3. The average family spends more than £800 a month.
4. A widow/widower with 2 children can receive as little as £79 a week from the State.
5. It can cost as little as £7p a day to protect your family with £100,000 life cover.

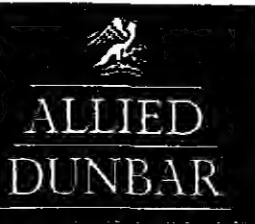
It's an alarming fact that many people are seriously under-insured. Some of them are simply not aware how much money their family would need, should the worst happen. Others may believe that the necessary life cover would be too costly for them to afford.

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Blair's character
MP tells

High Court
function
ended by
email

Blair's aide was a character assassin, MP tells libel trial

By Russell Jenkins

A LABOUR MP told the High Court yesterday that he saw a journalist, now one of Tony Blair's closest aides, soliciting signatures on a hand-drafted parliamentary motion.

George Galloway, MP for Glasgow Hillhead, said he saw Alastair Campbell, then the political editor of the *Daily Mirror*, with a newly elected MP outside the Commons tea room. The journalist was urging the MP to put his signature on an early day motion (EDM).

Mr Galloway said he took a special interest in the "perambulations" of Mr Campbell because he regarded him for years as the "hired character assassin" for Robert Maxwell. Mr Galloway suggested that, now Mr Campbell held an important position as chief press secretary to the Leader of the Opposition, "I have to keep these comments to myself". But he said: "My feelings are the same — that a man who could serve with such gusto the greatest thief of the 20th century in this country is the kind of person to be kept a wary eye on."

Mr Galloway was giving evidence on the second day of a High Court action brought by Rupert Allason, Tory MP for Torbay. He is suing Mr Campbell, *Mirror* Group Newspapers and Andy McSmith, another political journalist, for malicious falsehood and is asking for aggravated damages.

Mr Allason, the author of best-selling spy books written under the pseudonym Nigel West, claims that Mr Campbell was behind a fabricated story that appeared in the *Mirror* in November 1992. The story said that 50 MPs were challenging Mr Allason to hand over to the Maxwell pensioners £250,000 in libel profits he had made from the newspaper.

The *Mirror* Group acknowledges that the EDM had been drafted by one of its staff but strongly denies malicious



George Galloway, above, and Alastair Campbell



falsehood, that there was any malice behind publication or that Mr Campbell wrote the motion or the story.

Jimmy Boyce, the newly elected MP for Rotherham, tabled the motion. Mr Galloway said that his colleague, who had since died, was close to tears and later expressed remorse. Such a motion was "unprecedented in my experience" Mr Galloway added.

Richard Caborn, MP for Sheffield Central, said in evidence that he was buttonholed by David Bradshaw, Mr Campbell's deputy, and asked whether he was prepared to table the motion. Mr Caborn suggested that it should be done by Mr Boyce to give him some experience.

"Later that evening David

Bradshaw phoned me about the number of signatures and I assured him that Jimmy Boyce would get 50."

Mr Caborn said he came across Mr Allason haranguing Mr Boyce in the members' lobby after a division. "Jimmy Boyce said that Rupert Allason had said that Alastair Campbell had tabled the motion. He had no idea who Alastair Campbell was."

Charles Wilson, managing director of *Mirror* Group Newspapers and acting editor of *The Independent*, also gave evidence. He had investigated Mr Allason's complaints.

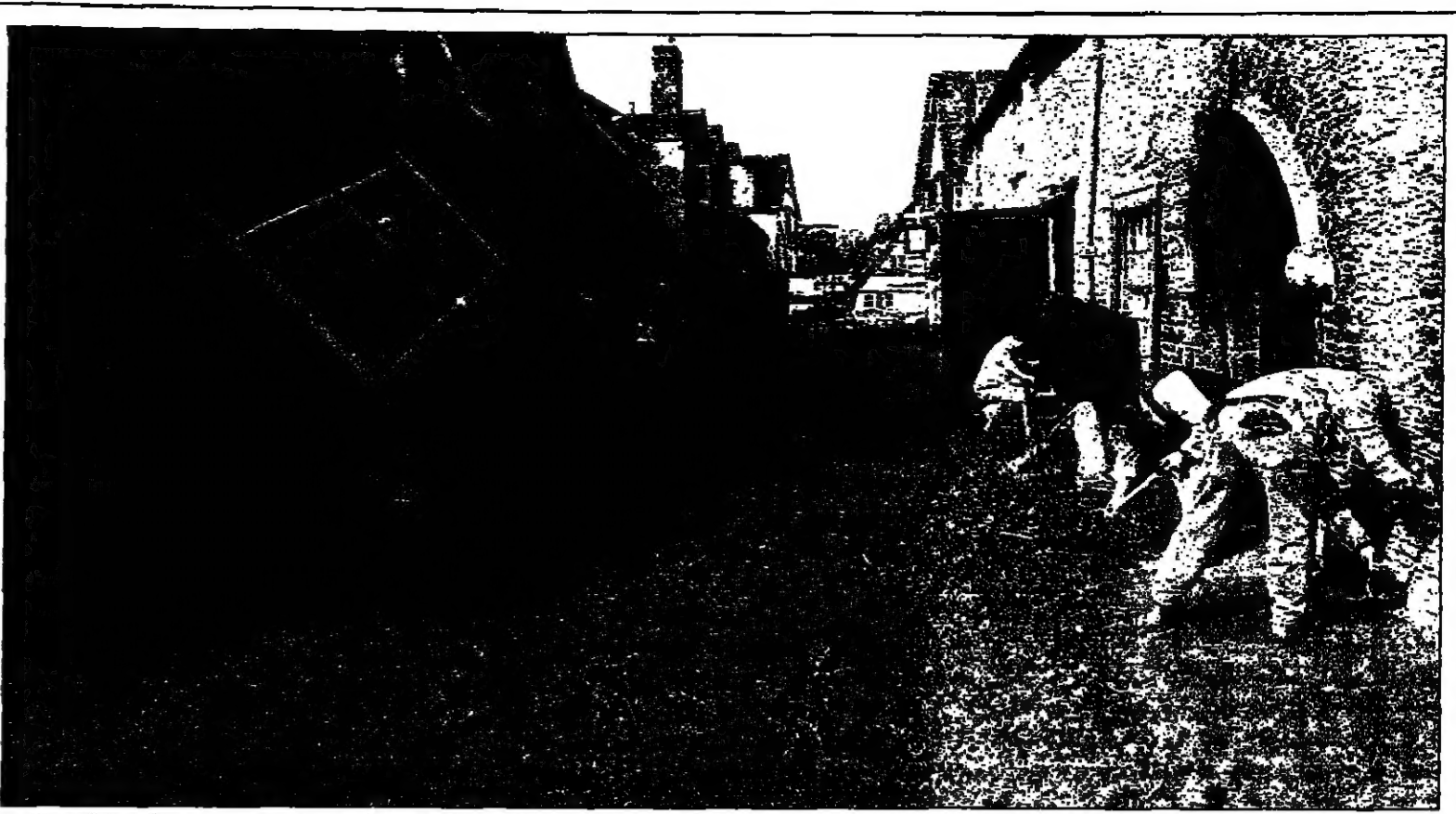
He told the court that he could not recall who drafted the EDM. He told the judge, Sir Maurice Drake, that he had no reason to believe it was Mr Campbell.

Earlier, Mr Allason, concluding his evidence in chief, was questioned closely about his knowledge of Mr Campbell's involvement in drawing up and seeking support for the EDM. The MP had earlier told the court that he had been warned by four people, two MPs and two lobby correspondents, that *Mirror* journalists and Mr Campbell in particular were looking to place the motion on a backbencher.

Mr Allason agreed with Charles Gray, QC, for the *Mirror*, that "he put two and two together to make five" when he concluded that Mr Campbell was the motion's author. He said: "I wouldn't say it was guesswork. I must admit that I couldn't believe that Mr Campbell would be willing to involve other people in this clandestine activity."

Mr Allason admitted that he had subsequently tried to get Mr Campbell sacked from his job as political editor of the *Mirror* and had later boasted around Westminster that he had been successful. He had written a letter to David Montgomery, company chief executive, telling him that there was a remedy "immediately available to you that I invite you to exercise".

The trial continues.



Muddying the name of costume drama: Technicians from *Moll Flanders* try to clean up after rain turned Church Street into a quagmire

Moll flounders in the mud of real-life drama

FILM-MAKERS were a little too successful when they tried to re-create the road conditions of the 18th century in a picturesque National Trust village. They hid the modern surfaces under 70 tons of soil, which promptly turned into a muddy quagmire after unexpected overnight rain.

Yesterday the residents of Lacock, Wiltshire — pop. 1,080 — were furious over the far from special effects of the Granada production of Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders*. One said: "The BBC filmed *Pride and Prejudice* here and we never had any trouble with them."

The soil was spread along Church Street in the village, which is standing in for old Colchester. Susan Walker, 86, who has lived in Lacock for half a century, said: "It is terrible. I am completely stuck. I don't dare cross the road for fear of falling over, which means I won't be able to go out to our local pensioners' club."

"Quite a few films have been done here over the



Pride and Prejudice in Lacock: "We never had any trouble with them"

years, but it has never been like this. This is a real nuisance. They have blocked the drains off with all that mud, so if we have much more rain my house could get flooded."

Margaret Vaughan, owner of a tea shop, said: "I think they were rather stupid putting it all down in the rain. I have 150 old age

pensioners coming for lunch today. I don't know how we are going to get them through all this."

"The carpets are so filthy that, when guests come in, they think they have arrived on the mud flats at Weston-super-Mare. I have had to wash all their boots and stockings."

Nick Sandford, a spokes-

man for the National Trust, said: "Vehicles were skidding quite badly and I was worried that there might be an accident. I understand that film and TV people usually use a mixture of peat and gravel to cover modern roads, but this time they used soil and limestone."

"With the torrential rain overnight, Lacock has been

turned into a sea of mud. It is a dreadful mess. The National Trust is not very happy about it. We are talking to Granada and we apologise to all people affected by it."

Defoe's adventure was first published in 1722, telling the story of a criminal heroine and her spiritual awakening. Ironically, the same author had much to say on the muddy state of the nation's roads in his subsequent travel book, *A Tour thro' the Whole Island of Great Britain*.

The new production, a £4 million costume drama, is being filmed at locations around the country, and is scheduled for release later this year. A Granada spokesman said: "Unfortunately we are victims of the weather. It is one of the perils of filming on location rather than in the studio."

"At the moment we are doing everything we can to make the best of a bad situation. Of course, if any damage has been caused by the filming we will pay compensation."

High Court injunction served by e-mail

By Frances Gibb

A LAW firm has broken with centuries of legal tradition by serving a High Court injunction via e-mail.

Schilling & Lom obtained the order from Mr Justice Newman after an individual threatened to distribute libelous material about one of its clients on the Internet. The threats were sent from an e-mail address on the Continent.

Jonathan Coad, a partner with the London law firm, said: "We believe this is a first in Britain. Normally writs or orders have to be served by hand; it can take several days to locate the person and the costs can be huge."

"The civil process of writ-issuing is still bound up in tradition. If you go down to the High Court to issue a writ, it is recorded in leather-bound ledgers by hand." By contrast, the injunction was issued electronically for the cost of a local telephone call.

"This precedent will make the service of proceedings, particularly outside the country, faster and less expensive," Mr Coad said. "It must be the way forward."

Judge says coma woman should be allowed to die

By Gillian Bowditch, Scotland Correspondent

JANET JOHNSTON, who has been in a persistent vegetative state for four years after taking an overdose, should be allowed to die, a Scottish judge ruled yesterday.

Lord Cameron of Lochbroom said that Law Hospital in Strathclyde can stop artificially feeding Mrs Johnston, a 53-year-old grandmother.

Lord Cameron said he had taken into account arguments made by lawyers acting for Mrs Johnston's interests that she be kept alive. He had also heard from four independent neurosurgeons that she had no chance of recovery. It would be a dereliction of his duty if he did not allow doctors to stop feeding her.

Mrs Johnston breathes for herself and can open and shut her eyes but she has not responded to any stimuli and has to be fed artificially.

Doctors at Law Hospital will wait until any potential appeal has been heard before withdrawing her feeding tube. She will then die of dehydration within 14 days.

Yesterday at his home in Allanton, Strathclyde, Peter Johnston, her husband of 33 years, wept at the decision. He

has backed the court case brought by the hospital and wants feeding to be withdrawn. "It is the right decision. I knew it was coming, but it is so hard to take," he said. "Janet was my only love and we were together for 30 years. It will be a big relief when she finally gets peace."

"When I see her for the last time I know what I will do. I will give her a last kiss and a long last cuddle and say 'goodbye darling'. When I see Janet it is so upsetting. I just sit there and hold her hand. But it doesn't make any difference."

Mrs Johnston's brothers, John and George, her husband and her daughter Linda Bryce said in a statement they were "relieved that Lord Cameron has allowed this to happen". Mr Johnston praised the doctors and nurses who have cared for his wife.

Dr John Browning, medical director at Law Hospital, said that, once he had assurances that there would be no appeals, doctors would wait two or three days and then withdraw Mrs Johnston's feeding tube. Any appeal has to be lodged within 21 days.

He said Mrs Johnston



Janet Johnston: has been in a coma for four years

would not need painkilling drugs but would be nursed intensively up to the time of her death. Robert Robertson, the hospital's director of nursing, said: "The nursing staff who have cared for Mrs Johnston 24 hours a day for the past four years support the decision taken."

There are about a hundred patients in a similar state to Mrs Johnston in Scotland and, although her case sets a precedent, the authority of the courts would be needed in each individual case before the patient is allowed to die.

Cardinal Thomas Winning, Archbishop of Glasgow, said he deeply regretted the judgment. "Never before in Scotland has nourishment been equated with medical treatment. Nourishment, which is food, is a right of every human being and to deny food is to starve a person to death — this can never be morally right."

Yacoub defends visit by Princess

By Emma Wilkins

PROFESSOR Sir Magdi Yacoub yesterday defended the Princess of Wales's presence during a heart operation on a seven-year-old boy.

The operation on Arnaud Wambo, sponsored by the children's charity Chain of Hope, was filmed by Sky TV at Hatfield Hospital, north London, on Monday. "It is a major misrepresentation to say that it was something to do with a photocall," the professor said.

"It wasn't something that was planned. Sky television were following the child and following the charity. The Princess was supportive to that particular charity and she happened to be there."

Sir Magdi, who waived his fee for the operation, denied widespread suggestions by commentators that the Princess's presence was a distraction or a danger. "We have people who are in charge of infection control. They apply certain criteria which are quite strict."

Hatfield Hospital said that Arnaud had been moved from intensive care to a normal ward.

Queen's protest at wealthiest woman claim is upheld

By Alexandra Frean, Media Correspondent

THE Press Complaints Commission has upheld the first complaint from the Queen, over a magazine article that claimed she was Britain's wealthiest woman.

In a ruling which could seriously curtail media speculation about the wealth of the Royal Family, the Commission said last night that *BusinessAge* magazine failed to check its facts, made a number of errors and presented speculation as established fact when assessing the Queen's personal fortune at £2.2 billion in an article last September.

The Queen is known to have objected to the magazine's decision to elevate her from seventy-fourth place to first in its annual list of Britain's 500 richest people by including the value of certain royal residences, art treasures and jewellery in its calculations of her fortune. She takes the view that this property is held in trust for the nation and cannot be sold for personal gain.

A spokeswoman for Buckingham Palace said: "The magazine presented an inaccurate and speculative over-estimate of the Queen's wealth and it was wrong in many

respects." The Queen's complaint represents an increasingly tough approach by the Palace to what it perceives as inaccuracies and invasions of privacy by newspapers.

"Given the increasing public interest in the royal finances generally, we considered it necessary to complain. In our view it is essential that readers have properly researched information," the spokeswoman said.

She said that the Queen's personal wealth was a private matter between her and the Inland Revenue, but added that estimates which valued it "upwards of £100 million" were grossly inaccurate.

In its ruling, the commission did not give an opinion on whether *BusinessAge*'s estimate of the Queen's wealth was correct. It concluded that the magazine should have explained the basis for increasing its valuation of the Queen's fortune from £158 million the previous year.

It said that the magazine's failure to check its facts with Buckingham Palace indicated a lack of care and that its research had not been exhaustive. Peter Kirwan, editor of

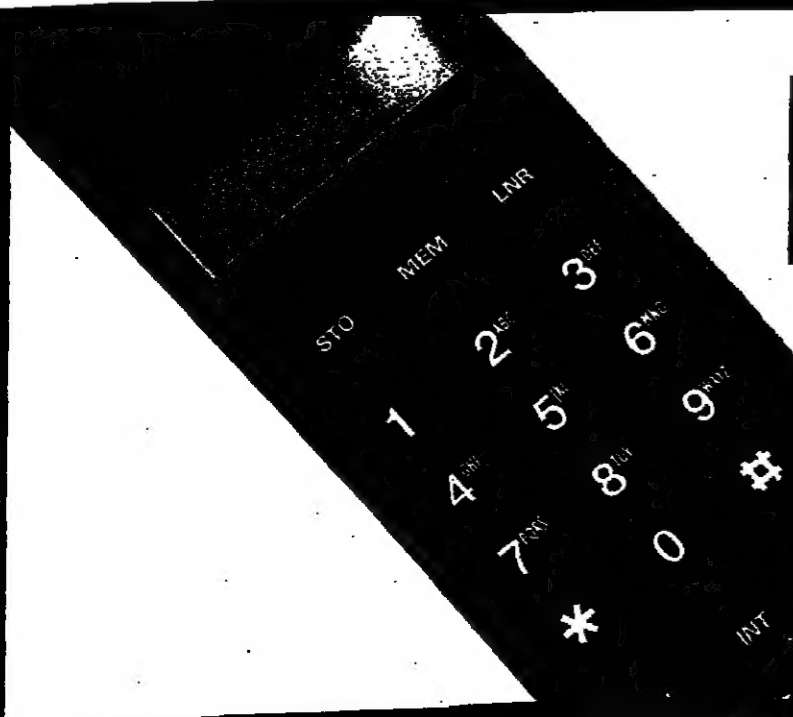


BusinessAge magazine ranked the Queen first

BusinessAge maintained that his magazine's valuation of the Queen's wealth was "justified and legitimate" and said that the ruling would restrict freedom of expression. "There will be an increased reticence on the part of journalists to look at all of these issues, which are very topical at the moment," he said.

Mr Kirwan criticised "archaic structures of ownership which are obscured by excessive secrecy" and said that if the Palace was not prepared to enter into a dialogue about the Queen's wealth, he would have no hesitation in publishing the same £2.2 billion valuation next time, although he said that he would include a fuller explanation of how it was arrived at.

Other members of the Royal Family have complained to the commission on three previous occasions and in each case the complaint was upheld.



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Top state school is ignoring bullying

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American chain taps demand for all-day nurseries

By DAVID CHARTER
EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

AMERICA'S largest childcare company will open breakfast-to-teatime nurseries in 20 British towns for children as young as six weeks after huge demand at a pilot centre in Cheshire. The KinderCare nursery at Warrington runs from 7.30am to 6.30pm. Bookings for full or part-time places have been so buoyant since it opened almost a year ago that capacity has been increased from 75 to 100.

News of the expansion comes in the wake of criticism on Tuesday by the head of a leading independent school, Paddy Holmes, chairman of a 300-strong association of independent schools, said the nation was beginning to treat children like young animals by putting them into nursery schools too soon.

The youngest child who stays all day at the Warrington nursery is three months old. The Alabama-based company, which has 1,300 centres in 38 American states, is building its next centre in Luton, Bedfordshire. David Kedwards, its development director, plans to build on five more sites soon from a shortlist of 20, including Bristol, Reading, Swindon, Crawley and Bracknell. "We are



Sir Christopher Ball, left, director of learning at the Royal Society of Arts and author of *Start Right*, which argued for nursery education from the age of 3, said: "There are strong educational grounds for putting your child into good centre-based learning at 3, 4, or 5 for half a day. At the ages of 2 or 1 it probably does not do any harm, but it may not do any good... Under the age of 1, I am quite sure it is a mistake. I would be uneasy about a child in full-time care plus education much before the age of 6."



Margaret Lochrie, left, chief executive of the Pre-school Learning Alliance, said: "For very young children it is probably best to be with their parents. It is possible to provide day care for children of a good quality but it needs high staff ratios and a family-like atmosphere. In those circumstances we are sure the children do not suffer at all. The real problem is the shortage of good-quality care. Young children need individual attention for emotional development. They can get it from people other than their parents."

tailoring the American experience for the UK," Mr Kedwards said. "We are a genuine all-day nursery, five days a week, 52 weeks a year."

Christine Spencer sent her son Matthew to the Warrington nursery from the age of three months so that she could resume her career as a management accountant. Matthew, now 15 months, is taken before 9am for breakfast and collected after 4pm.

Mrs Spencer said: "When children are a bit older, I think it is harder to send them away. I do not think there was any adverse effect. Matthew almost finds it boring if we have

a week off. I can understand the criticism, but the present economic climate is such that you cannot easily turn away from a well-paid job."

Sue Jones, the centre manager, said that it was popular with parents who left early to travel to Manchester. "About 80 per cent of our children are in before 8.30am. We are able to take 18 children under the age of one and all those places are full, with a waiting list." A full-time baby place costs £112 a week. A full-time nanny can cost up to £250 a week.

Mrs Holmes, head of Ditcham Park School, Petersfield, Hampshire, said yesterday that she did not intend to criticise nursery schools, which were responding to demand. "It is the situation nationally and the lack of government support for working women that I was getting at," she said.

KinderCare carried out three years' research in Britain, which it regards as a huge untapped market, with the lowest level of pre-school provision in Europe. "The States are ten or 15 years ahead of the game and the childcare industry is a more sophisticated beast," Mr Kedwards said.

The company came to Britain before launching developments in Singapore and Australia because its research concluded that, by 2000, 80 per cent of new British jobs would be for women and the number of one-parent families would have increased.

There are no nursery or playgroup places for more than half the country's three-year-olds but Labour is promising to remedy that. The Government has pledged to introduce nursery vouchers for three-year-olds "in the medium term", which could stimulate more demand for private places.



Sue Jones with one of her charges: 80 per cent arrive before 8.30am for breakfast

Top state school 'is ignoring bullying'

By PAUL WILKINSON

THE parents of ten children who have allegedly been bullied at a leading state school have withdrawn them and asked Gillian Shephard, the Education Secretary, to intervene.

They say that little or nothing has been done despite a series of complaints to Harrogate Grammar School, in North Yorkshire over the past two years. They also say the school has still to fulfil a requirement to devise a formal anti-bullying policy 16 months after being told to do so.

The school was highlighted last month by Chris Woodhead, the Chief Inspector of Schools, as one of 32 "outstandingly successful" secondaries in England and Wales. Liz Carnell withdrew her teenage son John in December 1994 after he was punched in the stomach. She said her complaints to the headmaster, Kevin McAleese, were not dealt with adequately.

Mr McAleese denied that Mrs Carnell's complaints had been ignored and said an investigation by the local education authority had shown the school had acted properly. It was also devising an anti-bullying policy.

Boy of 6 is barred for rejecting ultimatum

By ADRIAN LEE

A BOY aged six was excluded from school after he refused to sign a contract guaranteeing his good behaviour.

The parents of Andrew Eaton, of Trafford, Manchester, said it was unfair to ask a child so young to enter into such an agreement. His parents also refused to sign the agreement, which required Andrew to keep the classroom tidy, sit quietly and put his hand up before answering a question.

Karl and Heather Eaton described the contract as "an ultimatum" from Wellscre Infants School, which then excluded Andrew for persistent bad behaviour. They claim their son has a condition called Attention Deficit Disorder and should not have been expelled before an assessment.

Andrew was accused of throwing school equipment, biting a teacher, interrupting lessons and attacking other pupils. The contract, with a space to sign his name, included the words: "This is a chance to behave well again. If I break that rule again I will have to work in the corridor. My mum and dad and teachers will be sad."

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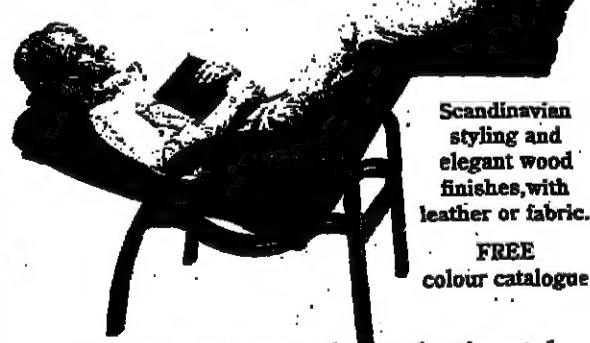
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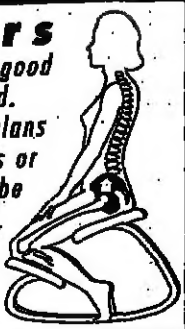
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BY PAUL WILKINSON

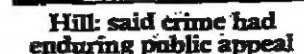
The ten-minute single reel was made when Hardy was a 23-year-old solo artist known as Babe, and considerably heavier than in his later films. It tells the story of four amorous young men who *think a woman has winked at*

Glenn Mitchell, who has written extensively about Laurel and Hardy, said: "It is a very important film. Laurel and Hardy fans in America had heard of it but no one knew it still existed."



BY ALEXANDRA FREAN
MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

Mr Rogers acknowledged that police and crime programmes were popular, but he said they militated against the commission's long-term aim of reducing levels of violence on television. One



pitfall, he said, was exposed last November by *Police Action Live!*, a two-hour slot that followed Saturday night police activity in a number of areas. The expected activity and excitement had failed to materialize. Mr. Rogers said, "Programmes involving footage of emergency services can be cheap but with this programme everyone was waiting around for something to happen and it never did; all the drunks stayed at home and watched the programme."

Leslie Hill, chairman of ITV, said that the network's strong crime and police content reflected "the enduring popularity of these subjects

Channel 4 was praised for retaining a "distinctive character" and for its news and factual output, but was criticised for an increase in repeats and a lack of original material. Sir Michael Bishop, chairman of Channel 4, blamed the statutory funding formula, which requires the station to give a proportion of its profits to ITV.

Television: page 48

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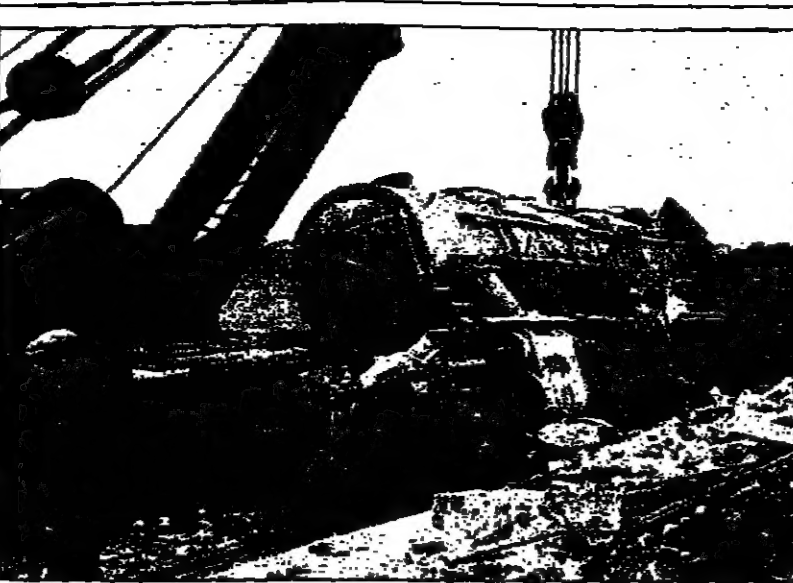
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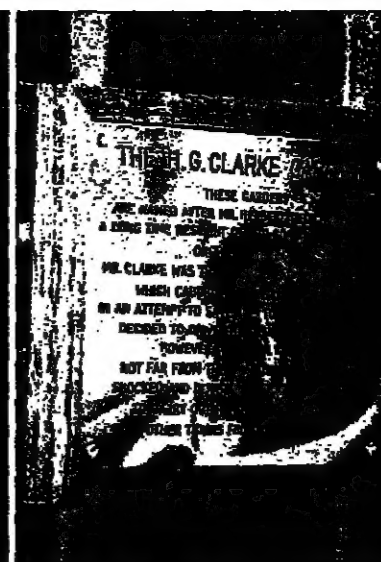
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BUT FOR SUCH MEN AS THESE



Herbert Clarke helped to prevent a train-load of bombs destroying a Cambridgeshire village in 1944. Although the act was marked by a book, it was not until this week that his son, Arthur, saw his father's heroism recognised officially

Railman who saved village from wartime disaster is honoured

By ROBIN YOUNG
THE bravery of a wartime railway guard who prevented a train-load of bombs exploding has finally been recognised.
Herbert Clarke, then 59, was on a train which caught fire while transporting 44 500lb high explosive bombs four days before D-Day in June 1944. A spark ignited the first wagon behind the steam-

engine tender as the train approached the station at Soham, Cambridgeshire.
Knowing it could explode at any moment, Mr Clarke and the train's fireman, Jim Nightall, 22, spent three minutes unscrewing the hot coupling so that the burning wagon, which contained two bombs packed in straw in wooden crates, could be separated from the rest of the train. The

engine driver, Ben Gimbert, then tried to use his steam locomotive to pull the wagon into a siding away from the village, but within seconds the bombs detonated and blew up a gas storage tank. The blast destroyed the station, damaged 600 homes and killed Mr Nightall and a signalman, Frank Bridges, 42.
Mr Clarke, who was blown onto an embankment by the blast,

and Mr Gimbert, who suffered serious shrapnel wounds, survived. As soon as he recovered consciousness, Mr Clarke rushed to put signal detonators on the line to warn an approaching mail train that the wagons containing unexploded bombs were on the track ahead. Mr Gimbert was later awarded the George Cross and Mr Nightall was given the same honour posthumously.

Years later a road in Soham was named Frank Bridges Close in honour of the signalman, but Mr Clarke, of Ipswich, Suffolk, never received any commendation, even though his injuries left him in a wheelchair for much of his life.
A sense of injustice led his son, Arthur Clarke, to pursue a 34-year campaign to have his father's heroism officially recognised. His efforts finally succeeded this week

when, after three decades of writing to British Rail, local councils and the Government, a new communal garden close to Ipswich's first railway station was named H.G. Clarke Gardens by the borough council. A plaque donated by BR was unveiled by the Mayor of Ipswich.
The honour came 20 years after Mr Clarke's death at the age of 90 in 1976. His son, aged 75, from

Stowmarket, Suffolk, said yesterday: "My father saved dozens of lives but he was completely bypassed in the honours. I was determined to get him recognition. It is better late than never."
Arthur Clarke's former neighbour, Bernard Dye, 72, who by chance witnessed the blast as he flew overhead in a Lancaster bomber, said: "All the train crew showed remarkable bravery."

Model denies she had affair with 'slimy' millionaire

By KATE ALDERSON
A FORMER model who claims she was raped by Owen Oyston, a millionaire businessman, yesterday denied having an affair with him. "He came across as being slimy and creepy," she said on the second day of the trial in which Mr Oyston denies raping her and raping and indecently assaulting another teenage model at his country mansion, Cloughton Hall, near Lancaster.
"He smells of Obsession aftershave by Calvin Klein. The smell now always makes me feel sick," she told Liverpool Crown Court. She denied she had ever been on affectionate terms with Mr Oyston, chairman of Blackpool Football Club and owner of regional magazines and radio stations. When asked if she had ever said she intended to marry him, she replied: "After he had raped me? That would be absurd."
The woman broke down in tears as Anthony Scrivener, QC, for the defence, questioned her. She sobbed: "They have had private investigators asking my friends when I was ten years old if I was a virgin. They have gone through my personal life with private investigators and reporters turning up... tearing my whole life apart."
Mr Scrivener said: "Mr Oyston's case is that you were never raped and you had an affair with him that was well known for quite a long period of time." The woman was asked to try to remember exactly when the alleged rape took place, but said she could



Oyston: former model hated his aftershave

remember only that it was in 1988. Mr Scrivener asked her if she could remember which day of the week, which month or which season the alleged rape took place. The woman answered "No".
He asked about the differing ages and dates of birth she had given in statements at previous hearings. She told him: "I have always lied about my age. If you ask 100 people, 90 would say women lie about their age. In the modelling business certain clients ask for a certain age so the girls will make out they are younger."
Questioned further by Mr Scrivener about the accuracy of times and dates, she said: "Talk about who is on trial."
Mr Justice McCullough told her: "You have insisted that man in the dock raped you in his house when you were 17. Counsel is exploring where you were and what work you were doing."
The trial continues.



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A northern jewel the Lib Dems have under lock and key

THE Liberal Democrats rule the Harrogate and Knaresborough district council, have held power since 1990; were they to lose every one of the seats up for election next Thursday (they will not) they would retain overall control. Eat your heart out John Major.

Harrogate itself is a jewel of a town with enough parks and greenery to permit crossing from one side to the other without setting foot on Tarmac. There is the National Rhubarb Collection at Harlow Carr Gardens (the second "r" in Carr was added to deter folk in search of second-hand Cortinas). The Royal Baths, the thriving conference centre, more antique shops than you can shake a Georgian salver at. Betty's tea rooms — famous for hot cinnamon toast — and the Drum and Monkey restaurant renowned for the freshness of its fish, the allure of its asparagus hollandaise sauce and the fact that it is so permanently booked that you have to put children down for a table at birth.

In 1991 Robert Banks, local MP since 1974, narrowly avoided deselection; in 1995 he did not. The former Chancellor and Euro-sceptic Norman Lamont will stand for the Tories in a constituency



FREUD'S ELECTION RIDE

diminished in size by the loss of surrounding, largely Tory, rural areas. It will be a tough battle.

The Yorkshire grandees wanted a high-profile representative. They have one. (In fairness it would be hard to present a lower profile than that of Mr Banks, who lives in Suffolk, is considered less than overly bright though scrupulous in turning up for public functions, Remembrance Day parades and pleasing the party whips.)

The elders of the kirk would approve of Lamont's Euro-views for they neither trust nor have affection for people ineligible to play cricket for Yorkshire; though the ex-Cabinet minister's Spitting Image persona might be difficult to overcome. The imponderable

is whether there are Conservatives who will come out of the woodwork now they have a new candidate.

Lamont has promised to live in Harrogate if elected and his wife's family are from Weatherby — a fact I never heard mentioned when he represented Kingston-upon-Thames. He now goes North every week and there have been sightings of the man on local doorsteps.

I asked him how he was received.

"People are a) pleased and b) surprised."

What are the issues? "New development is doing nothing to preserve the local character. Conservatives would give value for council tax. Lib Dems have introduced a draconian parking scheme, which my party would liberalise."

Councillor Andy Wright represents 50 per cent of the Labour presence on council. He canvasses nightly, says that the Blair factor is greatly helpful. Labour rejects the concentration of resources to the centre of Harrogate and "we are keen on playgrounds and traffic calming and creating equality between the people who pay council tax and conference visitors on whom the money is spent". At Ashdown House in the



Harrogate, where the tea rooms and antique shops are thriving but the Tories are struggling, with no hope of winning control of the council

parade beside the railway station the Lib Dems have their headquarters. They are led by the charismatic Phil Willis — council chairman and prospective parliamentary candidate.

They think they have got it about right, else they would not remain in power; they would like to be able to raise more money, build an exhibition centre to go with the conference centre and compete with Birmingham's NEC but are in no conflict with Conser-

vative councillors other than on sale of housing stock. They would like elaboration on how the Tories would achieve tax cuts and retain services.

Betty's Tea Room was full. I queued for a table, engaged people in the queue in local election talk. None were voters; 80 per cent were foreign visitors. I had hot chocolate and a Fat Rascal, a large nicely spiced currant bun with lots of butter served by a woman dressed in black skirt and white blouse. In his day

Alan Bennett would have paid one shilling and ninepence. My bill was £4.35. Walking to lunch, I see that signs of the recession remain: well-located shops are to let, houses for sale.

The Drum and Monkey has been full since noon; you can get a brilliant three-course meal for about £12. "If you're not competitive you're dead," says the owner. I get a table, eat oysters (it is my birthday), chat to neighbours.

Harrogate is not the place it was: has lost its genteel image, ceased to be a safe Conservative seat. Lamont is there because it's far enough from Westminster to keep him out of John Major's hair and if he raises his profile and does not soften his anti-Europe stance, he might get in.

The consensus is that the town is now made up solidly of caterers for the conference centre. Just as the theatre struggles because off-duty waiters and chefs don't go there, so is it unlikely that these folk will vote, especially not in local elections. The Drum and Monkey says it is anti-Europe as are all fish restaurants, and they are not that keen on the parking scheme whereby visiting farmers have to spend £4 for a day's parking in town.

"And local farmers are having a bad time, can't afford that?"

"Good heavens no; they're rolling in it."

□ Saturday: Clement Freud in Stratford-upon-Avon

HARROGATE FACTFILE

Until this year there were 60 seats on Harrogate council, with 20 being contested at each election. The seats in next week's election were last contested in 1992, when the Tories won 11, the Lib Dems eight and independents one. After by-elections and the transfer of one seat to York, the Lib Dems and Tories are each defending eight and the independents three.

Present council: Lib Dem 41; Conservative 12; Labour 2; Independent 4.

The council was Tory-controlled until 1991, when it became hung. The Lib Dems took control within a year after a series of by-election victories and have been increasing their strength ever since. Last year they took four seats from the Tories.

The Tories hold both parliamentary seats with substantial majorities. Phil Willis, the council's Liberal Democrat leader since 1992, will stand against Norman Lamont at the general election.

The Liberal Democrat leader said his party will use next month's local elections to fight all "misleading tax promises".

In a speech at Twickenham, he accused the two parties of treating the public with contempt and shattering trust in politicians. He said: "The country cannot have a serious debate about its future, if it cannot have a serious debate about how to pay for things." Labour was

accused of acting like frightened rabbits in the headline of Tory spending attacks.

The Liberal Democrats are also focusing on health during the campaign. Yesterday they produced a survey showing that half of family doctors want to leave medicine for new careers or early retirement.

Almost half the GPs surveyed were "not very satisfied" or "not at all satisfied" with the job. More than 80 per cent said that they were being asked to meet unrealistic targets.

Ashdown issues tax truth challenge

By Alice Thomson, Political Reporter

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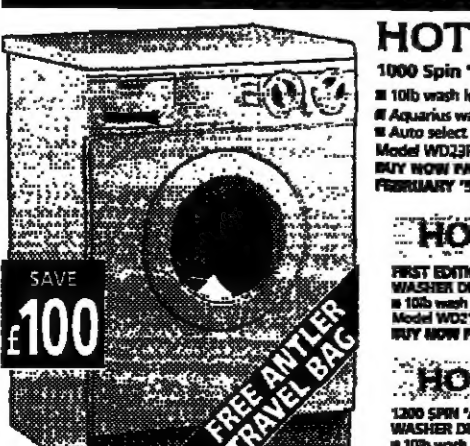
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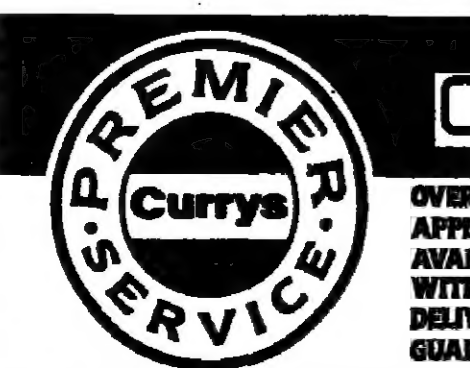
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Howarth cleared to stand for Labour

By JILL SHERMAN
CHIEF POLITICAL
CORRESPONDENT

ALAN HOWARTH, the MP who defected from the Tory party in October, was last night given the go-ahead by Labour's ruling body to seek a seat at the next election.

Under present Labour rules, parliamentary candidates must have been party members for at least two years before standing for local election. But yesterday the National Executive Committee agreed to waive the rule for Mr Howarth, MP for Stratford-on-Avon.

The decision followed speculation about whether the Labour leadership would impose Mr Howarth as a last-minute candidate in a vacant seat just before the election.

Yesterday the NEC announced that, after taking legal advice, it had decided to make an exception for Mr Howarth because of his "right and principled stand" in switching from the Tories.

The decision will encourage other Tories who may have considered defecting but were put off by the two-year rule.

Mr Howarth will be able to apply for any of the 15 to 20 winnable seats in the Midlands and northern England



Alan Howarth after being welcomed to the Labour Party by Tony Blair last year

still to choose a candidate. He said: "The NEC's decision reinforces the welcome that I have received since joining the party. I recognise it is for local Labour parties to select their Parliamentary candidates. I simply hope that there may be a constituency Labour party that will be willing to consider me."

After a heated debate the

NEC also decided by a narrow margin not to hold a fresh ballot to choose the parliamentary candidate for Swindon North.

Last September Michael Willis, a former aide to Gordon Brown, the Shadow Chancellor, defeated Jim D'Avila, a union official, by 114 votes to 84. But Mr D'Avila took legal action to

secure a fresh ballot amid claims of vote-tampering. A Labour party report found that the procedure had been "fundamentally flawed".

Last month a High Court judge upheld the party's right to impose a candidate. The NEC voted by 14 to 12 yesterday to appoint a special panel to interview the shortlisted candidates again.

Tory MPs demand moral basis for divorce law

By ALICE THOMSON AND JAMES LANDALE

TORY backbenchers led the attack on the Government's divorce reforms yesterday, claiming that they would cause a big increase in marital breakdowns.

Edward Leigh, a former Trade Minister, urged the Government to scrap plans to introduce no-fault divorces after one year. He admitted that Parliament could not stop the disintegration of marriages but said it could lay down the "moral cornerstone".

He said the Lord Chancellor's Bill gave divorce on demand and people would be able to prove irretrievable breakdown of marriage just by saying, "I divorce you".

"The concept of fault should be retained not because we want to say 'you are guilty, you should admit it' and build up bitterness in a marriage. But it serves a purpose sometimes to say: 'I'm sorry, I was wrong'. We all know if you try to solve problems on the basis of no pain, no shame, no apology, perhaps it will make it even more difficult to start again and rebuild a relationship."

Although the main purpose of the Bill was to try to get rid of acrimony in divorce proceedings, as presently drafted it would not achieve that aim.

"If you bring in no-fault divorce, what about the bitterness of the injured party?" He also gave a warning of the "catastrophic effects" of

divorce on children. "Our law in this area for the best part of 2,000 years has been based on our Judeo-Christian inheritance. Do we this afternoon wish to sweep that all away?"

Dame Angela Rumbold, a vice-chairman of the Tory party, said the Bill should concentrate on making the marriage contract more solid, not less. "Is the message we really want to give to the nation that marriage vows mean nothing?"

Sir Michael Neubert, a former Tory minister, said: "The removal of fault is equal to saying there is no contract, therefore there can be no breach of contract."

Elizabeth Peacock, Tory MP for Batley and Spen, said: "What's being proposed is that a couple gets married on a Saturday and if on the same day

they take out a finance agreement for 24 months, they have a firmer commitment to that marriage, and it's nonsense."

But Patrick Nicholson, Tory MP for Teignbridge and a former divorce lawyer, disagreed. "One thing I learnt fairly quickly was that the pit of misery and unhappiness which two people locked in deadlock in matrimony can cause each other is absolutely bottomless," he said.

He said he understood why Mr Leigh wanted to reintroduce the fault concept. But he had seen how fault was used. "In practice, if you have to produce a fault, you will pull, as if out of a hat, a fault."

Timothy Devlin, Tory MP for Stockton South, who has been divorced and remarried, said Mr Leigh's argument was

based on a fundamental fallacy. "Currently, the actual round for divorce is irretrievable breakdown of the marriage, which is merely proved in five different ways, including fault. So at the moment, we already have no-fault divorce," he said.

Sir Edward Heath, Father of the House, rejected Mr Leigh's demand for a restoration of fault in divorce proceedings. "It breeds perpetual discontent and affects the children in particular." He added that religious MPs should be wary of imposing their beliefs on the public.

John Patten, the former Education Secretary, said the number of divorces would equal the total of marriages in 2020 if the Bill went through.

Michael Allison, Tory MP for Selby and a Church Commissioner, said: "It is a eunuch of a Bill in relation to fault. All we ask is that the reality of fault is specified, put up front ... so that reconciliation can get to work and be effective."



Leigh: concept of fault should be retained



Nicholls: need to blame leads to 'pit of misery'

IN PARLIAMENT

YESTERDAY in the Commons: backbench debates; education and employment questions; Family Law Bill, committee; National Health Service (Repeal) Bill, committee; stages; in the Lords: Law Reform (Year and Day Rule) Bill, second readings; Civil Aviation (Amendment) Bill, committee.

TODAY in the Commons: questions to Home Office ministers and the Prime Minister; Finance (General) Bill, second readings; Channel Tunnel Rail Link Bill, remaining stages; in the Lords: Northern Ireland (Entry to Negotiations) Bill, all stages.

bring you all this

Crusading spirit of times past that new Labour lacks

RIDDELL ON POLITICS

Many Labour supporters regard the next election as primarily an opportunity to end the long Tory era rather than as the start of the New Jerusalem. Expectations are low, and have been deliberately lowered by Tony Blair to avoid later disappointment and charges of betrayal.

There is no sense of a crusade. The contrast with the mood before the Labour victories of 1945 and 1964 is highlighted in a series of essays by a group of Labour sympathisers, academics and industrialists entitled *What Needs to Change*, edited by the Labour MP Giles Radice. It complements the recent insider analysis, *The Blair Revolution*, by Peter Mandelson and Roger Liddle, and *Options for Britain*, a series of essays on policy options produced after a Nuffield College conference last year.

The new book reflects the realist/pragmatic strand in centre-left thinking on everything from the new working environment (Charles Handy), via competitiveness (David Sainsbury) to crime and punishment (Stephen Turnim) with level-headed views on health, education and Europe. The emphasis is mainly on lessening the social divisions produced by the Thatcher-Major years rather than big leaps forward. The authors believe that the State can have a beneficial role, but in a more limited way than before the 1980s.

Lord Young of Dartington, the author of Labour's 1945 manifesto, argues that the party's victory then was built on three coalitions — the first of ideas between the working-class socialist tradition and Liberals like Keynes and Beveridge; the second between radicals and patriotism; and the third between intellectuals, thinkers and planners on the one hand, and practical politicians on the other. He believes a coalition of ideas is to some extent in place now, but argues that the Left has not come to terms with the radical policies needed to provide more jobs and greater security. I am less sure that there is wide support for big shifts in policy as opposed to a change of party in office.

The main exception to new Labour's caution is its wide-ranging proposals on constitutional change. These both unite a wide range of opinion on the Centre-Left and divide the opposition parties from the Government. The practical difficulties raised by both the broader reform agenda and House of Lords reform in particular are discussed in the first two reports this morning from the Constitution Unit, a research project staffed by former civil servants. The reports provide the fullest discussion so far of the political and parliamentary issues raised by these reforms. They show both what changes may be needed to parliamentary procedures and how reform of the Lords goes much further than excluding hereditary peers. Anyone who believes reform will be simple and quick should read the reports and think again.

These changes could affect the whole legislative programme of a Blair government. As Professor Hennessy writes in relation to the broader prospects for Labour, it "cannot risk the Centre-Left being tainted once more (and perhaps permanently) by the stain of drift and incompetence".

What Needs to Change, (HarperCollins, £14.99). The two Constitution Unit reports are £10 each from 4 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RA.

PETER RIDDELL

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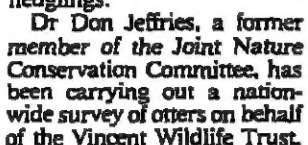
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DIAL DIRECT

By Nick Nuttall, Environment Correspondent

Alistair Driver, conserva-



Dr Jeffries said that otters had begun recolonising areas such as Suffolk, the west country and Hampshire in

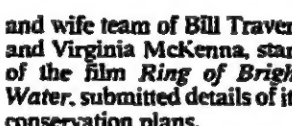


Dr Jeffries said there may be more than one other near Reading. Males tend to leave extensive marks such as those found only to stake out territory when there are rivals in the area. He said the lessons on re-introductions, habitat management and conservation learnt in Britain might prove invaluable to countries such as the Netherlands, Germany and France.



BY GILLIAN BOWDITCH

But ministers withdrew it at the last minute after the Born Free Foundation, which was established by the husband



Ring of Bright Water tells how Gavin Maxwell acquired a pet otter, gave up his job in London and moved to

The tiny island between Kyle of Lochalsh and the Isle of Skye would hardly be recognised by Maxwell today. It had remained unchanged for centuries until the Scottish Office bought it as a prop for the Skye Bridge. Now the

Eilean Ban was home to Maxwell for 18 months before his death from cancer in 1969. His white-washed slate-roofed cottage still stands but has been allowed to fall into disrepair. Teko, Maxwell's

"It was completely without grass and reminded him of his childhood home at Elridge in the Borders. He was trying to encourage eiders on the island and had plans to open it as a small wildlife sanctuary, but then he became ill and the plans were shelved. When he died I had to sell the cottage and the land to pay some of the debts."

Viscount's injury

Viscount Weymouth, 21, who was injured in the collapse of a hostel in Delhi that killed his girlfriend, best friend and 15 other people, is being detained in hospital with injuries to the vertebrae in his neck. His family had hoped that he might fly home soon.

Team spirit

Manchester United is to sell an "own label" whisky, featuring its Red Devil coat of arms, in bars at Old Trafford. Alcohol watchdogs fear that the brand, which will also be available at supermarkets and off-licences, could encourage under-age drinking.

Two charged

Two men were charged with the murder of Kathleen Hempsall, 40, a midwife found stabbed to death in her home in Lincoln 19 months ago. Perry Calvert, 20, and Alan Boulter, 20, both from the Lincoln area, will appear before magistrates on June 3.

DIY death

A man was killed by an electric shock as he tried to fix his washing machine. Julie Goulding, 30, said her husband Mark, 32, had refused to call in professionals when the machine broke down in their Bristol home, flooding the floor with water.

Under a cloud


Firemen were called in a fire station when burnt toast set off the alarm bells. A toaster caused clouds of smoke after crews left Cardiff central fire station on an emergency. Office staff were evacuated until a crew from nearby Roath unplugged the toaster.



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Peter Hyton Cleever
Neil Eadie
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ROY CLARKE

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMME
(FACTUAL)
SHORTY CRANAGE
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**LOYD'S BANK PEOPLE'S VOTE FOR
FAVOURITE TV PROGRAMME**
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20th Century Fox TV
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JOHN TAYLOR
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PETE COLLINS
CHERS GRAVER
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0471 201525

Russians recycling weapons systems

By MICHAEL EVANS
DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

THE cream of Russia's defence engineers continue to devise advanced weapons concepts, but with little chance of ever getting the new designs into production, according to the International Institute for Strategic Studies.

The "allegedly new designs", introduced since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, were almost always modifications of existing systems.

In its annual survey of security-related events around the world, the London-based institute said the rapid decline of the former Soviet military-industrial system appeared to have passed "the point of technical collapse".

"With only a handful of exceptions, the broad capabilities that sustained the Soviet Union throughout the Cold War have virtually disappeared... what remains is a huge industrial potential to mass-produce weapons of 1970s and early 1980s vintage," the IISS survey said.

Russian engineering teams "retain the ability to promote highly advanced weapons concepts and, in some cases, they can delineate innovative designs, but the ability actually to produce sophisticated new weaponry has all but disappeared".

The IISS survey said: "Development is proceeding on a completely new tank and on other systems, including a Stealth fighter, but there is no evidence of the industrial wherewithal to take such plans beyond the prototype stage."

With its entire defence budget for 1996 planned at 80,000 billion roubles (\$11.13 billion), there were minimal funds for production. Only about 20,000 billion roubles were available for equipment procurement.

"Much of this budget must be spread thinly to sustain over five million workers still employed by over 2,000 defence plants," the survey said. To help sustain the aerospace industry, Russia was dependent on winning export sales.

□ Strategic Survey 1995/96, Oxford University Press, £20.

Death of Dudayev leaves Chechens in power vacuum

FROM RICHARD BEESTON IN MOSCOW

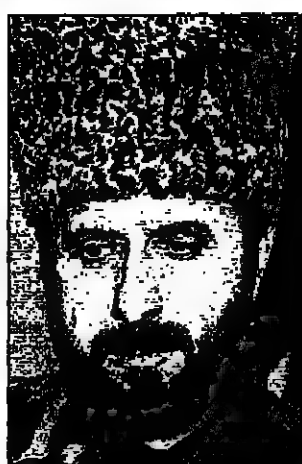
A BITTER and possibly bloody power struggle is expected among top Chechen guerrilla chiefs as the rebel movement tries to fill the power vacuum left by the death of its leader, Dzhokhar Dudayev.

The breakaway republic has announced three days of mourning for Dudayev, 52, who died during an airstrike on Sunday night near the village of Gekhi Chu, 20 miles south of Grozny. As he was buried yesterday, many Chechens were already wondering which of the disparate group of mountain fighters would emerge to head the independence struggle.

The rebel authorities, who control a string of villages south of the capital, Grozny, and the sympathy of most Chechens, have announced that Dudayev's deputy, Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev, will lead the movement for now.

The burly former writer, 44, is best known for his unwavering loyalty to Dudayev and his hardline views, rejecting compromise with Russia. Yesterday he vowed to continue the fight. "The tragic death of the first President of Chechnia has not broken the Chechen people and it is ready to continue... Its struggle," Tass quoted him as saying.

However, Mr Yandarbiyev



Yandarbiyev: named as temporary successor

is not considered powerful enough militarily or influential enough among clan leaders to head the separatist movement at a critical period, when it must decide whether to fight or negotiate.

The two Chechen commanders expected to emerge as leaders are Aslan Maskhadov, chief of staff of the rebel forces, and Shamil Basayev, the popular and flamboyant field commander. In an interview earlier this month with the daily newspaper *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, Mr Maskhadov, a former Soviet army officer, confirmed his moderate views and willingness to negotiate with Russia.

"This war is useless. There can be no victors. We must look at the future realistically," he said. The commander, credited with building the Chechen forces into one of the most formidable guerrilla armies of modern times, distanced himself from terrorist operations and said he was willing to resume peace efforts broken off last summer.

In contrast Mr Basayev, who commanded the raid into the southern Russian town of Budennovsk last summer, is totally uncompromising and has given repeated warnings that he is prepared to resort to terrorist acts inside Russia unless its forces pull out.

The leadership battle will depend to a large extent on how the Kremlin responds to Dudayev's death. President Yeltsin, who arrived in Chechnia yesterday, said the peace drive would go on. "With or without Dudayev, all the same we will settle everything in Chechnia peacefully," he told Tass.

Last month the President announced a peace initiative to end the 16-month conflict, which envisaged a partial pull-out of Russian forces and talks via an intermediary. If the Russian leader is serious, and can rein in bellicose generals, Dudayev's removal could give him the chance to reopen dialogue. A deal before June's presidential elections would be a huge asset. But there is a real fear that the rebel movement could splinter into rival groups.

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Dudayev: never lived in his homeland Chechnia until he became leader in 1991

Rebel with fanatical self-belief

By THOMAS DE WAIL

A HOST of unanswered questions have gone to the grave with Dzhokhar Dudayev. The most intriguing is to what extent the leader of Chechen nationalism was a Soviet general to the end.

Even at the height of the war there was suspicion that General Dudayev, 52, still maintained links with his old comrades in the Russian Air Force. Petr Delnoid, the air force commander, who masterminded the bombardment of Grozny and Chechen mountain villages, admitted recently that he had known the general, although he had "never drunk a glass of vodka with him".

A former aide to the rebel President tells the story of how he planned a trip to Lithuania in 1992 by ringing his air force friends. They cleared an air corridor for him across Russia.

Dudayev grew up in Kazakhstan in the 1940s and 1950s, along with the rest of the Chechen population exiled there by Stalin, and never lived in Chechnia until he became leader in 1991. His school was the Soviet military,

where he was regarded as a loyal officer who scrupulously carried out orders to bomb Afghanistan.

His wife, Alla, is a Russian living in Estonia. His poor command of the Chechen language was one reason why he co-opted Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev, a poet and one of his likely successors, to be his Vice-President.

Yet his proud demeanour and fanatical self-belief tapped a rich vein in the Chechens, who in 1991 were emerging from years of persecution and humiliation by the Soviet authorities.

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EU rules on coach seat belts

Brussels: Seat belts must be installed for passengers in all new European coaches and minibuses by 2001, according to a European Union agreement this week that ends years of squabbling over road safety (Charles Bremner writes).

Under the new directive, all new-model coaches must carry two-point belt systems and strengthened seats from October next year. Two more years will be allowed for the installation of belts in new vehicles of existing models. New model minibuses will be required to have three-point belts from October 1999 and all new vehicles will come under the rule two years later.

Doctors strike over reforms

Paris: The French Cabinet pushed through three decrees to rein in the expensive and unwieldy healthcare system as doctors went on strike in protest (Ben Macintyre writes). The reforms complete an overhaul of the social security system outlined by Alain Juppé, the Prime Minister, last autumn, which prompted the worst strikes in France since 1968. Doctors' unions say the latest moves will ration care and turn doctors into "accountants".

Airport flaw

Düsseldorf: The airport at Düsseldorf did not conform to German fire regulations when a blaze killed 16 people on April 11. All the dead had inhaled toxic fumes, which made scores more people ill. The North Rhine-Westphalia Prime Minister, Johannes Rau, said flammable material was used in passenger terminal false ceilings. (Reuters)

Old lags off rails

Rome: A gang of three grandfathers, posing as elderly gentlemen, looted and pick-pocketed travellers at one of Rome's central train stations, *La Stampa* newspaper said. Confessing their crimes, the gang-leader, Domenico Panella, 81, said: "But we weren't violent". (Reuters)

Berlusconi questions election result

Rome: Italy's right-wing alliance yesterday engaged in increasingly bitter recriminations over its defeat in last Sunday's election, with Silvio Berlusconi, the media tycoon and leader of the conservative Forza Italia party, complaining that the votes which delivered a centre-left victory "did not add up" (Richard Owen writes).

There seem to me to be an impossible number of spoiled ballot papers, not least

in areas like Emilia Romagna. Signor Berlusconi said, Emilia Romagna is a traditionally left-wing area and the home region of Romano Prodi, the economics professor from Bologna who is set to become Italy's next Prime Minister when parliament convenes on May 9.

Signor Berlusconi, who was Prime Minister for nearly eight months in 1994, has spent the past three days studying the

election returns and declared that the ballot did not reflect voters' true intentions.

Alberto Michelini, a Forza Italia politician who is still contesting his narrow defeat in last year's regional election in Lazio, said: "It's easy to spoil a ballot paper: you just scratch it."

Leaders' early test, page 38

War crimes tribunal releases dying general

By MICHAEL DYNES

THE UN war crimes tribunal yesterday gave up one of its star witnesses to the atrocities committed in Bosnia-Herzegovina because he is dying of cancer.

General Djordje Djukic, the man responsible for the shelling of Sarajevo which killed an estimated 10,000 civilians, was released on humanitarian grounds.

General Djukic, 62, the most senior Bosnian Serb held by the war crimes tribunal in The Hague, has terminal pancreatic cancer. Dutch medical experts say he has weeks to live. A defence request for all charges against General Djukic to be dropped on the

ground of insufficient evidence was dismissed.

Judge Richard Goldstone, the Chief Prosecutor, reluctantly agreed to the general's release, arguing that he would be unable to participate in his own defence.

War crimes investigators had hoped to use him as a test case for the doctrine of "command responsibility", under which senior officers are held accountable for acts carried out by their subordinates. They also hoped that he would give evidence against Radovan Karadzic, the Bosnian Serb leader, and General Ratko Mladic, the commander of the Bosnian Serb army.



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Buyers pay dream prices for a little of Jackie O

Feverish bids to capture stardust of a First Lady

FROM QUENTIN LETTS IN NEW YORK

A BIDDING frenzy on the opening night of the Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis auction confirmed the extraordinary esteem in which the late First Lady is still held, and said much about America's cult of the personality.

Sotheby's pronounced itself amazed by the blizzard of bids for even the smallest souvenirs of "Jackie O". A simple tape measure, three inches in diameter, sold to a Manhattan fashion designer for \$42,500 (£28,000) excluding commission. That was a tenth of the sum paid for President Kennedy's favourite rocking chair, which went to an anonymous buyer for \$400,000 (£265,000).

Yet even that — for a thin-cushioned chair which had been estimated to fetch \$3,000 — was not the most extravagant gesture on a night of sybaritic spending. A cigar lover, Marvin Shanken, paid well over half a million dollars for a walnut humidor which

was given to President Kennedy by Milton Berle.

Mr Berle, who had been hoping to buy back the humidor, said: "I never dreamed it would be worth that much. But I think it's terrific." Mr Shanken said that he had long been "in love" with President Kennedy — "a great man and a great smoker". It was a great night, too, for those who oppose New York's draconian anti-smoking policies, and Mr Shanken triumphantly (and illegally) lit himself a fat cigar to celebrate.

Bidders were encouraged by a feverish atmosphere in the auction hall and were rewarded with applause and back-slapping for feats of high expenditure. A dowdy lamp used in the former Mrs Kennedy's White House suite went for \$42,500 (£28,000). "Is the bulb included?" quipped an onlooker. The answer was no.

Amid increasing hubbub, Mrs Onassis's dressing table set sold for \$35,000 (£23,000). A Robert Rauschenberg portrait of JFK fetched \$220,000 (£146,000), and her baby grand piano was bought for \$150,000 (£100,000) by a Mrs Pat Baher as a gift for her husband, despite the fact that Mr Baher is no musician.

Proceeds from the sale will go to Mrs Onassis's two children, Caroline and John Kennedy, who did not attend. The Kennedy children have said that they hope the astonishing trove of possessions, some precious, others touchingly mundane, will take with them to the outside world a little of their mother's spirit. For bidders, there was the



Rocking the record books: JFK in his favourite chair, a thin-cushioned seat that fetched \$400,000. Like so much in the auction, its price raised gasps

elusive hope that by buying something once owned by Jackie O, they could acquire some of her sheen.

More than 90,000 absentee bids were received, and telephones at Sotheby's New York offices were jammed. At least 1,000 people were admitted to the sale hall, with auxiliary rooms in Los Angeles and Chicago, and by the end of the evening the air in the hall was fetid. Bidders came from London, Paris and Tokyo, with a discernible sprinkling of South Americans.

The first of eight sale sessions, comprising 71 lots, made \$4,477,700 (about £3 million) not including auction house fees. Sotheby's originally expected the entire sale to make only \$5 million. The estimates for lots were preposterously low with, for instance, a little 19th century footstool going for 290 times its guide price of \$100.

Some bidders in the hall on Tuesday night wondered if Sotheby's stunted estimates in order to attract bids and generate a sense of expectation. Others argued that no sensible auctioneer could have got estimates so badly wrong on purpose.

Yesterday morning New York tabloids expressed their astonishment at the success of the sale in characteristically robust fashion. "Jackie Dough" cried the *Post*. The *Daily News*: "Off their rockers".

The most spectacular bids may yet be to come. Mrs Onassis's jewellery, including the pearl necklace once grabbed by the infant John-John and the vast diamond given to her by Aristotle Onassis as an engagement present, are expected to attract sums reaching the millions.

Sale of century, page 19



American silver-cased tape measure from Tiffany
ASKING: \$500-\$700
SOLD: \$18,975

Cigar humidor given to President Kennedy by Milton Berle
ASKING: \$2,000-\$2,500
SOLD: \$574,500

A footstool used by Caroline Kennedy in Jackie's bedroom
ASKING: \$100-\$150
SOLD: \$33,500

An American hide-covered rocking horse belonging to Caroline Kennedy
ASKING: \$2,000-\$3,000
SOLD: \$58,250

Dynasty's fortune secured by grand 'garage sale'

BY QUENTIN LETTS

AMERICA has no Royal Family, but has more than made up for it with the Kennedys. Despite all the philanderings of its menfolk, the ogre-like personality of old man Joseph, Chappaquiddick and a thousand bar bills, the Kennedy clan has a grasp on the American imagination that exceeds all others.

"Jackie O How Could You?" headlines asked when Mrs Kennedy wed the Greek shipping tycoon, Aristotle Onassis, but even that unlikely union did not dent the love America felt for the former Jacqueline

Bouvier. It was, more than her beauty and her position, her aloofness that earned her the lasting fascination of a society used to disposable personalities. She kept the public at arm's length. The desire of ordinary citizens to learn more about her had much to do with the astonishing sums paid for trinkets from her parlour.

There has been speculation about the motives of Caroline and John Jr in selling so many of their mother's possessions. Are they trying to cast off the pelt of history? However, it has been disclosed that when she realised she was dying of cancer in 1994, Jackie Onassis

plotted the grand "garage sale" which started in spectacular manner on Tuesday night.

Alexander Forger, Mrs Onassis's lawyer, said this week that while she wanted her private papers to stay with the family, she felt little for her many chattels. "For tangibles, for furniture, tables, rugs, pictures, it was simply another element of property that had served its purpose and now could serve another purpose," he said. So she planned the great sale, the proceeds of which should secure the financial comfort of her children.

No snip for cigar lover's best friend

BY LEVIA LINTON

THAT President Kennedy's humidor sold at auction for \$574,500 will not surprise cigar lovers who will spend as much as £10,000 on custom-made cabinets or boxes to keep their cigars fresh.

The best humidors have a special electric humidifying system. Cigars age like wine and the circulating air helps the ageing process, according to Luc Daire, humidor expert at Alfred Dunhill.

More modest humidors, usually lined with cedar wood and costing around £270, are used for temporary storage for 50 cigars.

Turkey's coalition shaken as MPs back inquiry into Ciller

FROM ANDREW FINKEL IN ISTANBUL

THE Turkish parliament decided yesterday to throw Tansu Ciller to the wolves — so threatening a ruling coalition not yet seven weeks old.

MPs voted by 232 to 179, a larger than expected majority, to support an opposition motion to investigate the former Prime Minister for "misuse of office" over public tenders.

The motion was brought by the pro-Islamic Welfare Party as part of a promised vendetta to avenge its exclusion from power after December's election. However, some of Mrs Ciller's government partners in the Motherland Party appear to have supported it.

During a bitter election

campaign, Mesut Yilmaz, the Motherland leader, accused her of abusing high office to enrich a coterie organised by her husband, Ozer Ciller. Last March Mr Yilmaz swallowed his pride and pulled out of negotiations with Welfare to form a Government with Mrs Ciller's True Path Party.

The understanding was that Mr Yilmaz would be Prime Minister until the end of this year and Mrs Ciller for the next two. Yesterday's vote may mean she will not get the chance. The launching of an inquiry into her handling of large state electricity contracts could end with her indictment. The investigation alone, how-

ever, means she is disqualified from being a minister.

Yesterday's vote was not on the most serious charge against Mrs Ciller. Many believed the motion was a stalking horse for a graver accusation parliament will consider on May 9 concerning a sealed tender she is accused of having opened improperly.

It remains to be seen if Mr Yilmaz can survive his triumph. Mrs Ciller threatened earlier in the week to pull out of the coalition if the vote went against her.

The one hope for the coalition's survival is for True Path to close ranks and soldier on without Mrs Ciller.

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FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

Dole: says Clinton is 'incurable liberal'

campaign manager. Mr Knight, who is chairman of the Democratic National Committee's huge fund-raising gala on May 8, will run the day-to-day operations of the campaign staff. (AP)



**FROM QUENTIN LETTS
IN NEW YORK**

"This is the first direct evidence for radiation actually causing mutation in human children," Sir Alec said. However, he made clear that the findings did not mean the children would develop dis-

British families. The sons were also clearly down from parent to son and were permanently in the youngsters' meaning that they will on to their children.

Christopher, the State, militant lead- ing, salvos of s continued to nately across Israeli jets

Amman was ready to provide emergency aid to Lebanon and implied that the recent crisis may be nearing a ceasefire (Tom Rhodes writes). "I hope we're quite close," Mr Clinton said before meeting President Hrawi of Lebanon.

BY MICHAEL DYNES

BY NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

"This is the first direct evidence for radiation actually causing mutation in human children," Sir Alec said. However, he made clear that the findings did not mean the children would develop dis-

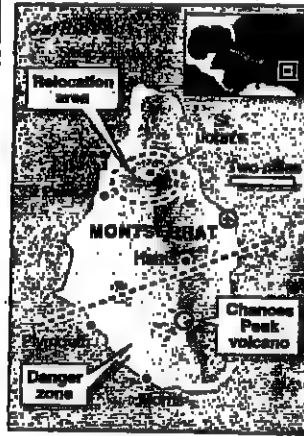
FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

As the Islamic militant leader was speaking, salvos of Katyusha rockets continued to rain indiscriminately across Galilee and Israeli jets

to meet President Assad of Syria after being snubbed 24 hours earlier. He later went into eastern Lebanon to meet Rafik Hariri, the Prime Minister, before returning to Israel.

In Israel, backing for the Lebanon blitz remained high as the nation celebrated the 48th anniversary of its independence amid an unprecedented security alert to prevent Islamic revenge attacks.

and hoped that the Lebanese crisis may be nearing a ceasefire (Tom Rhodes writes). "I hope we're quite close," Mr Clinton said before meeting President Hrawi of Lebanon.



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October 1

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Tokyo cult leader tells trial of search for 'ultimate truth'

FROM ROBERT WHYMANT IN TOKYO

AT THE start of his trial yesterday, Shoko Asahara, leader of the Aum Shinrikyo doomsday cult, ducked the question of whether he plotted the last year's nerve gas attack on the Tokyo underground.

Mr Asahara refused to enter a plea to three charges, including one of murder in connection with the sarin gas attack that left 11 people dead and thousands injured in the morning rush hour on March 20, 1995.

When asked how he pleaded, the 41-year-old guru answered with a three-minute exposition of his religious views. "I want to help all the souls on earth to attain the ultimate truth," he said. Mr Asahara was also charged with the killing of an Aum disciple and the illegal production of anaesthetics.

His apparent lack of remorse provoked anger among who lost loved ones in last year's gas attack. "From his

attitude you could not even tell that he was attending a trial," said Tomoko Hirata, 24, who was among those injured. "He looked bored throughout."

Ms Hirata said she wanted Mr Asahara to apologise to his victims. "But I no longer think of him as a human being, so it is probably useless to ask him to do that," she said.

The cult leader fidgeted and stroked his long hair and beard as prosecutors read out the charges and the names of more than 3,800 victims of the gassing and the extent of their injuries. Once grossly overweight, Mr Asahara has lost about 60lb in prison since his arrest last May, according to a police source.

The guru appeared in court dressed in a dark blue prison tracksuit, after his request to wear religious robes was denied by Judge Fumihiko Abe. Prosecutors had objected that the wearing of robes would have an undesirable influence

on cult devotees. About 10,000 Aum members were in thrall of the guru before his arrest, and the authorities fear that Mr Asahara may try to use the trial to somehow control his dwindling flock.

From behind bars, Mr Asahara has smuggled out messages to disciples and once attempted to send locks of his hair and nail clippings for use in religious rituals.

Most of the key figures in the Aum cult, which preaches that the world will end in 1997, are also on trial and some have implicated Mr Asahara in courtroom evidence.

The start of the trial yesterday was delayed when the defendant gave his name as Asahara rather than Chizuo Matsumoto, his legal name. "I threw away that name," he said.

With several of Mr Asahara's followers on the police wanted list, tight security was in force around the



A sketch of Shoko Asahara, the Japanese doomsday cult leader, at the start of his trial in Tokyo yesterday

Tokyo District Court. Officials said the possibility of a "rescue attempt" by fanatical disciples could not be ruled out. The police presence was also intended to deter a revenge attack on the cult leader.

Media coverage was frenzied, with television networks cancelling scheduled programmes to bring day-long coverage of events. Cameras are not allowed in Japanese

courts to broadcast proceedings. Out of more than 12,000 would-be spectators who queued from early morning, only 48 members of the public gained entry to the court in a lottery for seats.

Police say the cult stockpiled arms and operated a biological warfare laboratory and a nerve gas factory in a plot to overthrow the Government and launch a civil war. Mr

Asahara faces 14 more charges in connection with these alleged activities in further trials. With appeals, the legal procedure could drag on for more than a decade.

The cult leader has said he is losing his mind because of the length of his confinement in the Tokyo detention centre. "I feel like an animal," he complained to a member of his 12-man defence team.

However, he apparently finds the food and general conditions more amenable in the detention centre than in police cells where he was held during regular spells of interrogation. "It's like going back to the zoo from hell," he is quoted as saying, describing the transfer from the cells to the detention centre.

Leading article, page 21

Dog meat back on the boat to China

FROM TOM WALKER IN HONG KONG

A FERRY operator phoning between Hong Kong and China now includes a popular Chinese snack on its lunch menu: dog.

The move has caused a row between the ferry company and the authorities in Hong Kong, where dog meat has long been banned. It has also renewed fears that dog could be back in Hong Kong restaurants after the handover to the Chinese next year.

Hong Kong officials confirmed yesterday that legal action may be taken against Chu Kong Passenger Transport. But Lee Ziquing, a Chu Kong spokesman, remained unrepentant, claiming the sale of dog meat was "no different to buying duty-free cigarettes and alcohol".

The sale of dog meat in Hong Kong can incur a fine of up to £500 and six months' jail. Mr Lee said Chu Kong was not breaking the law, since passengers could order the meat only once the ferry was clear of Hong Kong.

India poll hangs on caste vote

FROM CHRISTOPHER THOMAS IN LUCKNOW

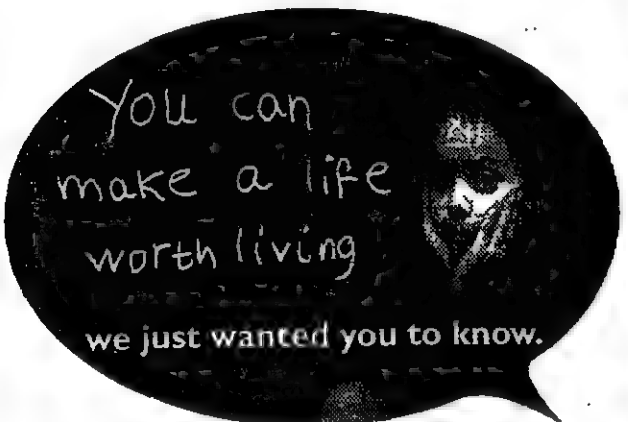
WITH two days before voting begins in India's general election, the outcome is already known: it will be a mess. Nobody can win outright and vast amounts of money will exchange hands in post-poll horse-trading to form a shaky government that will probably not last a full term.

The three main contestants, the Congress Party, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and the United National Front-Left Front alliance, will carve up most of the seats between them. All eyes will then turn to President Sharma, who will referee the fight to form either a coalition or a minority government. India has never had a national coalition, although it had an unhappy experience with minority government.

All but 20 per cent of the 590

million electorate are defined as "backward" castes, tribals or religious minorities. The two huge northern states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, which together account for nearly a quarter of seats in the lower house, are seeing a revolution that has empowered the "backwards".

Newly assertive backward castes are voting as they wish instead of as high castes tell them. The Congress Party, which has governed for most of the 49 years of independence, has thus been all but destroyed in the two crucial northern states. It nevertheless stands a good chance of forming the next government with the aid of regional parties. In any case, the outcome will be determined in smoky backrooms, and by suitcases of cash.



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HCOR 0065

Is home or a nursery the best place for your child? We examine three views of a problem many parents are facing

Living with the guilt

— THE MOTHER —

KATHY and Steve have a 14-month-old daughter, Anastasia. At 8am each weekday for the past year, Kathy has taken Anna to a local nursery before starting a full day's work. She collects her daughter at 5.45pm.

I knew I'd have to go back to work because we wouldn't have been able to cope on Steve's salary. We advertised in *The Lady* for a nanny and advertised locally for a childminder. Neither alternative really satisfied us. The nannies we spoke to were terribly young or didn't speak good English. We decided on a nursery because we felt Anna would be constantly stimulated. It was a hard decision but when we first visited our chosen nursery, I felt reassured — there was a good staff-child ratio and lots going on. I felt she would be safe and happy, although the thought of leaving her there was hard — in the three months since her birth I had never really been without her.

The week before I went back to work, Steve and I took her into the nursery to get her used to it. We stayed for 30 minutes and then had to go for an hour. I felt horrible. I looked through the window as I walked past and I could see her lying there in this room without me. I had this big lump in my throat. Steve was telling me not to upset myself but I couldn't help it. I felt so terribly guilty, like I was deserting her.

We got back to the house, but I couldn't relax. I was watching the clock go round, desperate to go back.

The first full day was even harder. Although Anna seemed OK, it was very, very hard to walk away. I couldn't concentrate at work. I kept looking at the clock and wondering what she was up

to. I rang after an hour to see how she was and then again at lunchtime — the nursery said I could ring as often as I wanted. I couldn't wait for the clock to go round.

The worst thing is waiting for a call telling you that your child is unwell, or has had an accident. It has happened a couple of times and the guilt is tremendous. You think you should have been there. I remember one morning when Anna had a rash under her arm. It wasn't serious and she wasn't in pain so I took her into the nursery. Even though she was fine I felt so guilty all day that I vowed I would never do that again.

She seems happy there, but it is hard knowing that you are missing your child growing and developing. Anna first crawled at nursery, she took her first step there. They told me when I went to pick her up and I felt proud, but said that I hadn't been there to see it. Steve and I both felt we'd missed something.

I have photos of Anna in my Filofax so that I can keep her with me during the day.

The best feeling in the world is when I pick her up — she comes running towards me, jumping up and down, rattling at the gate of her play area. She's so excited to see me. On a couple of occasions she's turned round and wanted to go back. It's a very strange thing thinking that she is more attached to the nursery than she is to you.

I'm doing this for her. I want her to have a good quality of life. While I would love to be at home with her, I know she's happy, she's being educated and she's learning to be independent. But it is a sacrifice and the guilt stays with you all the time.

KATHRYN KNIGHT



Fourteen-month-old Anastasia waits for her mum to pick her up from her nursery

Daycare can benefit babies

— THE EXPERTS —

Parents in other parts of Europe would be mystified by the debate that erupted yesterday over the merits of nursery education for two-year-olds. As in America, most take it for granted.

In France, the age of entry to the *école maternelle* has been reduced this year, allowing some children to begin state education at two-and-a-half. Parents drop them off at 8.30am and pick them up at 4.30pm, most worrying more about fatigue than the emotional effects of separation.

Belgium has similar arrangements, beginning at the age of three, while state childcare from an early age has been part of the system throughout Scandinavia for many years. In the United States, private nurseries and crèches cater for children who are only a few months old.

Academics have been arguing for decades about the psychological impact of childcare, but most of the

research has been conducted overseas because British provision has been so scarce. Studies in Sweden and the United States have concluded that there is no evidence of psychological damage that Paddy Holmes, the Ditcham Park headmistress, fears for children who are separated from home for long periods.

Researchers have found advantages in the development of social skills and there is evidence of academic benefits when children start school. In France, where 250,000 two-year-olds attend nurseries, only 10 per cent of those who start at two have to repeat the elementary year at school, compared with 18 per cent who start at four and 30 per cent who have no formal pre-school education.

The age group under discussion has become younger as the debate has gone on. While John Bowlby, whose Attachment Theory is the

seminal work, held that daycare in the first three years could damage, the focus has switched to those under one. More recently, however, nursery education for two-year-olds has almost ceased to be an issue. Professor Rudolph Schaffer, of Strathclyde University, says: "The research has been virtually unanimous that children benefit from good quality nurseries at quite a young age."

A project, which included figures from both camps and funded by the US Government, reported last week that after examining 1,200 children, more than half of whom were in full-time daycare, academics reached the conclusion that separation from the mother was not harmful, unless both the home and nursery lacked sensitivity. As long as there was a caring atmosphere in one sphere of their lives, children would survive emotionally.

JOHN O'LEARY

Weighing up what is best

— THE NURSERY —

WHEN Heidi Clapp opened the Corner House Nursery in west London, she had one strict rule: none of her 14 staff would wear a nursery uniform. As a former Noddy Nanny, she had come to loathe the regulation chocolate brown slacks that are the trademark of Britain's most exclusive pre-schools.

Though she thinks that day nursery is not right for every child, Mrs Clapp takes babies from as young as three months old. "We have nine places in our baby room and three staff to look after them," she says. "At present, all the parents of our babies work. Some are doctors, barristers, bankers and journalists. In most cases, the couple needs two salaries in order to keep the lifestyle they want. There are others who prefer their baby to be with other

children rather than at home with a nanny."

The baby room, in her Chiswick nursery, which opened in 1991, has mobiles over the cot and music playing. Babies can stay for ten hours, but many parents start their youngsters with half-days. The £700-a-month fees include nappies.

Mrs Clapp, 37, who is married to a BBC manager and has another nursery in Ealing, preaches what she practices. Her son, Adam, now six, attended the nursery from the age of three months. The benefits are clear, she says, adding: "He always liked mixing with adults and children. I think it benefited him to start here at three months — he is now ad-

vanced for his class at primary school."

Mrs Clapp thinks mothers should not feel guilty about leaving their children at an early age. She says: "Plenty of studies say that so long as the child has formed an emotional base, they can go on to make further emotional ties easily."

Mrs Clapp believes the most important balance to strike is to recognise the difference between your own needs and the child's. For example, she took her son to swimming lessons when he was three. "He hated them," she says. "I realised I was doing it to benefit myself because I was so proud that my son could swim. You have to weigh up what is best for your child."

EMMA WILKINS

Good rays in small doses

After the war, George Watkins's service life ended with a couple of years in a sanatorium. Diagnosed as having TB, a diagnosis since questioned, he was lucky to survive.

Recently George, now in his 80s, developed a persistent cough. It is almost certainly nothing more than bronchitis attacking a badly damaged lung but, as TB can become reactivated in the older age groups in whom the immune system is failing, it seemed in order to arrange for a chest X-ray. Even if George hadn't had TB when he went into the sanatorium he had been given every opportunity of catching it once there.

George, however, had his own opinion about X-rays and thought, not unreasonably, that he had had enough for one lifetime. We agreed on compromise and procrastination.

Many people this week have been disturbed by the *Panorama* programme on the hazards of X-ray. Dr Michael Brindle, president of the Royal College of Radiologists who practises in King's Lynn, says that this week several of his patients have refused X-ray investigations, and in the case of some of them a lack of an X-ray could lead to serious ill-health.

There is a risk in X-ray investigations and therefore as a matter of principle unnecessary ones are not carried out.

Having a chest X-ray is less risky than smoking a single cigarette

Each request for an investigation is thought about carefully before it is ordered.

Patients should however be reassured, for the risk is very small. Someone living in Britain for instance is eight times more likely to die from exposure to the natural radiation in the environment, whether it is derived from the earth or cosmic radiation, than they are from visits to a hospital X-ray department.

The danger to George's life of having a chest X-ray is the equivalent of smoking one cigarette, not one a day, but one in a lifetime. Another reassuring calculation shows that the modern X-ray machine exposes the body during a chest X-ray to only half the additional radiation

to which it would be exposed by a jet flight to Spain. In theory 50,000 chest X-rays would be needed to increase the chances of a patient eventually dying from a cancer from 25 per cent to 27 per cent. Because chest X-rays are so commonly ordered they have tended to be regarded as a benchmark of radiation hazard when in fact they produce so little radiation that they can be too reassuring.

An X-ray of a complete spine, or a CAT scan, will expose a patient to many times

radiation. It is proud that its strictures on the use of unnecessary investigations have resulted in anyone living in Britain being likely to have been exposed to only half the amount of X-radiation that those who live, for instance, in Canada or Japan will have been.

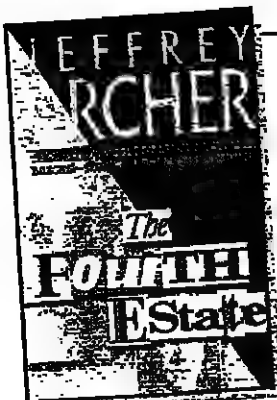
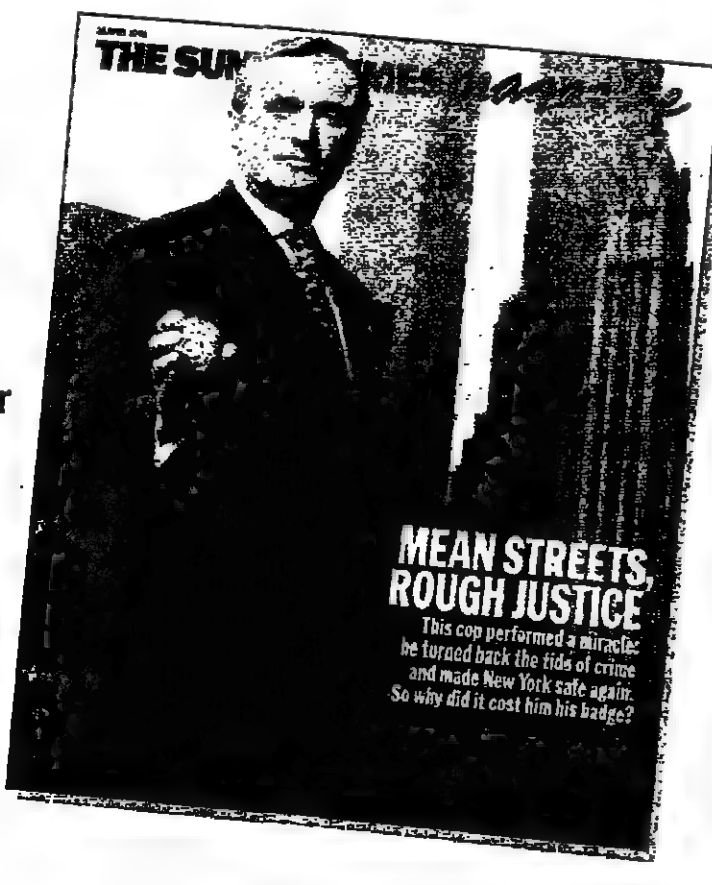
the amount of radiation used to obtain a chest film.

Although the Royal College of Radiologists is not complacent about the hazards of

THE SUNDAY TIMES CRIME BUSTER IS BLOWN AWAY

He tackled serious urban crime by getting a grip on petty urban crime, such as begging and vandalism. It worked: Bill Bratton was a sensational success as commissioner of police in New York. Then he had to throw in his badge...

Russell Miller finds out why, in *The Sunday Times Magazine*



JEFFREY ARCHER

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Fancy going out for a Bangladeshi?

Curry wars have broken out on the high street and the fate of chicken tikka may be at stake, Robina Dam reports

Most foreign imports bear little, if any, relation to the original source and the most popular Indian dish in this country is no exception. The next time you visit an Indian restaurant, whether it is the local Taj Mahal on the high street or the more upmarket Star of India in South Kensington, chances are that you will order a chicken tikka masala, consistently the number one choice for the past couple of years.

But it's time to lift the lid on the chicken tikka masala story, or CTM as it is known in the trade. Contrary to popular belief, this dish would not be recognised in India — for the simple reason that it doesn't exist there. Chicken tikka, cooked in the *tandoor* (or clay oven) is a familiar sight. But it is a dry dish and the British love of gravy with their meal meant that it needed an overhaul. Add a dollop of tomato sauce and the CTM was born. A classic example of market-led forces at work.

Unbeknown to the British public, it is not just the CTM that is non-Indian. So are the majority of

"Indian" restaurants. Most of them are run by Bangladeshis and this identity crisis has led to one of the most important periods in British curry history. Soon the face of the high-street curry house might change forever and the phrase "Fancy going out for an Indian?" could become an anachronism. The curry wars have started and your vindaloo is at stake. Should it be made the way grandmother does in Bombay, or is it permissible to dose curries with different strengths of chilli powder to retain the puniers' perception of an Indian meal?

These are hot questions in curry circles as they raise the matter of authenticity versus "give 'em what they want". Now there is a campaign afoot to rename three-quarters of Britain's 7,500 Indian restaurants as Bangladeshi. Pat Chapman, founder of the Curry Club and author of Indian cookbooks, explains: "In the 1970s

when the industry was really getting under way, Bangladesh was such a new country that most people in Britain hadn't even heard of it."

Bangladesh was part of Pakistan and it was only in 1971 that it became independent. Now the second generation of Bangladeshi restaurateurs want national recognition and have set up the Guild of Bangladeshi Restaurateurs. Marketing is a priority. At the guild's launch Angela Browning, the Food Minister, congratulated the achievements of restaurateurs from Bangladesh over the past 50 years. That the nation had only been



The face of Indian restaurants could change

around for 25 years had obviously passed her by. "It's about time you knew who was cooking your curry," declares Abdul Miah, owner of the Bina in Reading and one of the guild's three founders.

background star music. "As its name suggests, Elite will consist only of the crème de la crème of Indian restaurants. They will only be invited to join if they make the grade," he states.

Elite's co-president, Namita

Panjab, fans the chilli flames by comparing her chic Chelsea restaurant, Chutney Mary, with Le Caprice and Daphne's, in contrast to the Bangladeshi-owned restaurants "the fast-food equivalent of the Indian restaurant industry at the cheaper end of the market".

She points out that the top 5 per cent of the sector are genuine Indian restaurants such as the Bombay Brasserie, Tamarind and Café Spice Namaste. "If the Bangladeshi restaurants want to declare their national identity, then that's good for the image of the higher quality Indian ones. The food served by the Bangladeshis would not be recognisable in sub-continental homes," she says.

Mr Miah is furious at what he sees as aspersions cast on the culinary skills of Bangladeshi chefs and owners. "I'd like to know what ingredients she uses

that the rest of us don't. We all use the same spices, don't we? This is just snobbery."

However, Anil Kochhar, executive chef at the slick Mayfair restaurant Tamarind, is one of the Indian purists appalled at how traditional dishes have been corrupted. "It's a mission for chefs coming to this country from the sub-continent to change the way Indian food is perceived here."

Mr Miah dismisses the high-brow approach. "At the end of the day, we provide customers with what they want. Chicken tikka masala, korma and pasanda are our most popular dishes. Who cares whether they are authentic? If the evidence is anything to go by, not many."

The tale is about to come full circle. While the curry neighbours fight it out, the Anglo-Indian/Bangladeshi curries go from strength to strength. In an ironic twist, the chicken tikka masala has been introduced to India. Coals to Newcastle it may be, but it looks like Britain's success story is about to be repeated — this time on home turf.

Jackie O - going, going, gone



TONY PALMIERI

For sale: Jackie Onassis wearing her cabochon ruby and diamond earrings (enlarged above)

Now I know what it is like to be chased up by the mighty Diana "Dede" Brooks, the chief executive of Sotheby's. The corners of her mouth played into a smile and her right eyebrow quivered. She flashed those eyes, pouted, flared her nostrils. "Well?" she said. "How about it? Do you say yes? Hummm?"

Her proposal was not for some torrid tryst but rather, on the opening night of the selling of America's "crown jewels", that I should add another \$1,000 to my already stretched bid for a set of cracked, rather common-looking porcelain plates. On these plates the late Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy Onassis may, or may not, have served cookies on summer afternoons in Hyannisport. Mrs Brooks was hard to resist. Clad in cobalt, she stood on Tuesday night, hammer raised, on the Sotheby's stand in New York. I dithered, then declined.

The plates went for \$9,000, one of the cheapest lots on a night which saw a cascade of money. Outside, thunder announced Manhattan's first storm of spring. Inside it was pelting dollars.

Joan Rivers arrived in the hope of buying a couple of 3rd-century BC terracotta horses. "I knew Jackie O," she said with a wriggle of the shoulders. Joanne was one of several to leave the auction house disappointed. The terracotta horses, which had been given a catalogue estimate of \$12,000, went for \$72,500. Marie and David Cooper flew in from London to bid for the rocking horse on which little Caroline Kennedy played in the White House nursery in the early Sixties. "We have seven children ourselves," said the elegant Mrs Cooper, who described her husband as "Europe's most expensive lawyer". But even they were to be frustrated. Bids for the rocking horse, which started at the catalogue low estimate of \$2,000, rose within a couple of minutes to \$75,000. "Blimey," said a bug-eyed Mrs Cooper. "You could buy a Derby runner for that!"

The rocking horse went to a dark-haired beauty a couple of rows behind the Coopers. Beside her sat a plumpish, flush-cheeked man who had clearly just seen his wallet sucked dry.

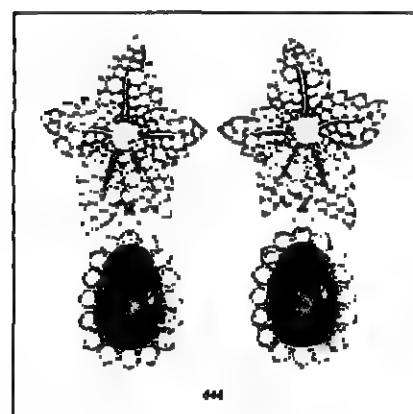
Before the sale began at 7.30pm there had been a discernible tension in the hall. As a bidder, I had the feeling you get when you are about to go out to bat in a cricket match: a prickling of the hairline and dryness of mouth. To acquire a bidding paddle you had first to be vetted by Sotheby's — "we can usually tell when someone is

Quentin Letts tries to join in the bidding at the Kennedy sale of the century in New York, but fortunately finds himself hopelessly outclassed

serious", said a suave auction official, giving my scuffed black shoes a dubious look.

The first lot, two dull seashell engravings, went for ten times their \$700 estimate price. The bidding took less than 20 seconds. Up came a Louis XV ormolu and patinated bronze mantel clock, estimated by Sotheby's experts to fetch something in the region of \$5,000. Whoosh went the bidding. Mrs Brooks shouting the numbers like a cattle auctioneer at Hereford market. "You say 39?" she cried to a check-shirted fellow at the back of the hall. "Nine!" he shouted back, with a Texan accent. But in came a higher bid. "Forty!" The Texan, beaten, slumped back in his chair.

Raoul Felder, New York's flashiest divorce attorney, who has in the past tried to offer advice to the Princess of Wales, shimmered by to say "Hi". What was he interested



Aristotle's wedding gift (est. \$25-35,000)

in buying? "The desk on which President Kennedy signed the nuclear test-ban treaty," he disclosed, scratching an ear. "It is the sort of thing a divorce lawyer needs, don't you think?" Par Kluge, former wife of mogul John Kluge, dumped \$120,000 on two Louis XVI chairs. She wanted "something specific to take back home to Virginia".

In the packed hall of more than 1,000 there were proba-

bly about 200 of us bidding seriously. A Japanese against the wall tapped furiously into a pocket calculator and shook his head. Former Chrysler chairman Lee Iacocca realised it was no night for financial logic and dropped his arm.

Time and again I entered the bidding. One time, with a rush of fear, I thought I had won a 1910 German earthenware pot with a bid far beyond my private limit. It was with some relief that Mrs Brooks, after starting to say "to the gentleman at the side...", noticed a higher bid from the floor. The pot, estimated at \$800, fetched \$37,000.

Pat Baher wanted Jackie O's ebullient baby grand piano, the one which used to stand in her Fifth Avenue duplex. Mrs Baher, on the left-hand-side of the hall, bid like a terrier. The price started at \$3,000, and an impressive struggle developed

between Mrs Baher and a man on the right. Mrs Brooks called their bids like a tennis umpire, switching her head from side to side of the hall as she looked to each bidder to see if more money was forthcoming. The price hit \$150,000. Mrs Brooks dropped the hammer and Mrs Baher had her baby grand, squealing with delight and clenching her fists in pleasure. "It is a gift for my husband," she told me. "He doesn't play the piano. But he will."

Bids were relayed by telephone from Los Angeles and Chicago, with LA winning some of John Kennedy's books and Jackie's cigarette lighter.

This really was the sale of the century, at least as far as New York was concerned. Manhattan loved Jackie Bouvier, and her death two years ago left a void at the top of the city's social pyramid. The extraordinary, even ridiculous amounts spent on the opening night of this auction were a very American demonstration of affection for a woman of mysterious substance.

After two hours of auctioneering, a hoarse, exhausted Dede Brooks accepted a glass of wine and I folded my unsuccessful bidding tool. "Never mind," said kind Mrs Cooper. "At least you got your paddle up."

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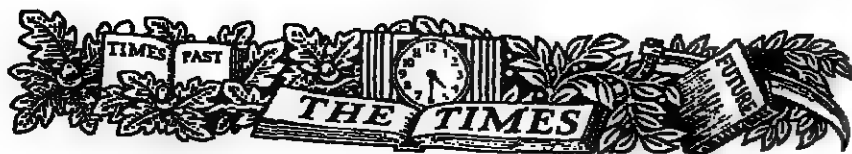
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BOOK OF CHANCES

A new chronicle of errors is good reading in a turbulent week

John Major's policy towards Europe remains a precarious straddle between opposing positions. He highlighted his difficulties again yesterday to the Institute of Directors, arguing for a Britain fully involved yet fighting its corner, operating at the top table but occasionally opting out. It has been a bipartisan British negotiating stance since the Sixties, but in the light of developments abroad and within Mr Major's own party it is becoming increasingly difficult for him to hold.

Mr Major dismissed critics who see Britain's links with Europe best confined to a common market as inhabitants of "cloud cuckoo land". He argued that Britain could not afford to be excluded from Europe's inner councils and that, from the inside, it could convince other states of the dangers of dissolving sovereignty. Mr Major may wish to save Europe by his exertions and example but as our economics editor, Anatole Kaletsky, points out on page 29, Europe is not going this Government's way. With Germany and France more likely with every week that passes to embrace a single currency, the Tory party grows daily more sceptical.

It is not only sceptics who think the current policy cannot hold. One of Britain's most eminent "Europeans" Sir Roy Denman, a former EC Ambassador to Washington, has published a book this week, *Missed Chances*, which examines the unhappy relations between Britain and the rest of Europe across this century, from the Moroccan crisis to the Major Government. It is a powerful polemic, particularly uncomfortable reading for those who believe that Britain can influence the Continent.

Sir Roy's diagnosis is that Britain, bedevilled by the past and incapable of shaking itself free from illusions, has seen its influence and interests damaged by the incompetence of its policy towards Europe. His prescription is submission before we are

forced to surrender — British acceptance of the social chapter, a single currency and a single foreign and defence policy.

Written with verve and an eye for telling detail, the book chronicles a series of errors, from Munich to Maastricht, in the management of relations across the Channel. But its resoundingly federalist conclusions are undermined, not buttressed, by the evidence adduced of the incompatibility of Anglo-Saxon and continental systems.

Sir Roy argues that the attempts since the war to strike a balance between the demands of an insular domestic political culture and the need to engage with the emerging EEC have been misconceived. He records French suspicion at the time of British negotiations to enter Europe. De Gaulle believed that honest British negotiating aims were wrecking amendments designed to stop integration. In the French political elite, that suspicion persists still. Wise policies from the British Government, designed to strengthen European co-operation, such as enlargement to the East or analysis of the effects of a single currency on outsiders, are still viewed as emasculating measures from perfidious Albion.

That suspicion persists, partly, because British interests differ in important respects from those of our European partners. De Gaulle observed in 1963 that Britain was "insular and maritime, linked by trade to varied and remote countries... industrial and commercial, hardly agricultural at all." That description of the nation's interests still holds. Sir Roy is keen on maximising British "influence" by increasing civil service penetration of the Commission and is prepared to trade independence for influence. But influence can be a chimera, bought too dear, while interests are real. Maintaining independence is still the most important way of protecting Britain's interests.

STRANGER THAN AUM

A doomsday cult's hold on Japan's brightest youth

In a Tokyo courtroom yesterday, a partially-sighted acupuncturist named Chizuo Matsumoto, alias Shoko Asahara, listened unmoved to a terrible recital, as the names were read out of 11 dead and more than 5,500 others who had survived the sarin gas attack on the Tokyo underground in March 1995 only after hospital treatment. The crimes of which he is accused include six other counts of murder and attempted murder and the illegal manufacture of drugs; but these crimes were mere harbingers of the poisoned apocalypse that he prophesied and which he and a dozen of his followers are accused of plotting to bring about. The alleged aim of Aum Shinrikyo, his murderous sect, was to seize control of Japan.

Superficially, the cult that he built from nothing into an empire worth well over \$200 million resembles other fanatical millennialist "religions" in the West. It used familiar techniques such as physical deprivation and extortion to secure the assets of its brainwashed recruits. But comparisons end there. Aum Shinrikyo was officially recognised as a religion, with assets listed on the Tokyo Stock Exchange and a network of at least 37 companies and another 21 dummy corporations. Its laboratories experimented in a wide array of highly toxic nerve gases and biological weapons made in its own factories, as were guns and explosives. Its procurement networks, which by last year had stockpiled, in massive quantities, more than 100 chemicals for its weapons programmes, spanned the industrial world. It saw itself, and functioned as, a state within a state.

The soul-searching that the Aum case has prompted in Japan concerns, most of all, the cult's ability to attract Japan's best and brightest young people. An alarmingly high proportion of Aum's 10,000 followers were

drawn not from the drop-outs of Japanese society, but from the middle-class graduates of its most prestigious universities. Through computer networks, Aum recruited huge teams of particle and applied physicists, organic chemists, mathematicians, astro-physicists, engineers and computer wizards to work on Asahara's planned Armageddon.

The obvious question is what persuaded young people with brilliant careers ahead of them to give up family ties and surrender their physical and mental liberty to the lunatic ambitions of a criminal doomsday cult. As the hearings drag out, possibly for five years, what will be on trial is not only the men in the dock, but the intensive Japanese educational system that discourages individualism and imposes homework loads that, by requiring study late into the night, isolates children socially throughout adolescence. Aum couched its evil agenda in a language of spirituality that contrasted with the materialism of modern Japan; it was different, and in that difference lay its attraction.

To many Japanese, equally shocking is the failure of the authorities to act earlier. As early as 1989, anxious parents grouped together to press charges of abduction. Aum murdered Tsutomu Sakamoto, the lawyer acting for them, together with his wife and young son. That same year, Aum successfully applied for charitable tax status as a recognised religion. In June 1994, a "poisoning incident" at a town called Matsumoto killed seven and made 200 ill; police failed to follow up a tip-off that Aum was responsible. The cult's headquarters were sporadically raided, but systematically investigated only after the Tokyo sarin attacks. Japan is the most law-abiding of countries; the trauma of this failure to enforce the law will linger long after this bizarre trial has become history.

RING OF BROWN WATER

The return of the otter is an indicator of nature's renewal

The otter has come back to the lower reaches of the Thames. It has not been seen here for a generation, and there were fears that it had been wiped out by pollution, pesticides and the pressure of humans up the Thames valley. But spraints (old otter language for droppings) have been found on the river banks near Reading, indicating that otters have been there for at least two weeks in their breeding season. This confirms the evidence given by returning salmon and other fish, and even a short-lived seal, that the Thames is cleaner and that pollution is dwindling.

Spraints is a medieval hunting term. England's most mysterious mammal was surviving in the Thames long before the Romans rowed up it. The first English hunters loved their quarry before they killed it. And their first manuals of venery or hunting, such as *The Book of St Albans*, printed in 1486, distinguish between the deer, the boar, the fox and the otter with particular names of multitude and other jargon. Old huntsmen, however, did not drive out the otter. Its killers were modern pesticides, the removal of vegetation to build bankside homes for Reading commuters, the dearth of fish and the superfluity of man.

Otters have long been favourite symbols of an idealised Arcadia when the Thames supposedly ran silver between green banks. Flowing over that muddy bottom, it was never either silver or sweet. Falstaff could tease Mistress Quickly affectionately as an otter

because she was neither fish nor flesh, "and a man knows not where to have her".

British anthropomorphic books often had otter heroes, and with some reason. For they are furry, handsome, intelligent and agile. Unlike almost all other mammals, otters are playful, even as adults. They frolic in grass, slide down river banks, and throw stones into the water, diving to catch them as they sink. Females call their whelps in the spring with a maternal whistle.

But contrary to their cuddly nursery appearance, otters would not have outlasted the wolf and the wild boar, and seen off the immigrant mink and the alien coypu, if they were not also extraordinarily efficient killers. They are the ferocious tigers of their ecosystem. They can swim for a quarter of a mile under water and run faster than a man on dry land. They are sabre-toothed waterweasels, predators which can range as far as from Reading to Oxford for their fishing.

Otters are making a come-back not just at Reading but throughout English rivers and other waterways. Last year they were reported at 687 sites, four times as many as there were 15 years ago. They are tough and resourceful old native animals. And British waters are becoming slowly cleaner by legislation, conservation and public concern about the environment. Nevertheless, our Reading otters would be wise to colonise upstream rather than down to London, at any rate until the millennium party is over. Being such slippery survivors, they will.

Labour policies new and old

From Dr Kenneth Swinburne

Sir, Your leading article of April 19, "Looking-glass Labour", highlights three facts which are critical for the future of Britain: that the Shadow Cabinet is only about a third Blairite, that the Parliamentary Labour Party also has Blairites in the minority, and that fewer than half the activists and trade unionists who attend conference are converted to their leaders' way of thinking.

This means that the underlying power structure of "new" Labour is broadly hostile to Mr Blair, is imbued with the attitudes of old Labour, but is willing to operate under a false prospectus to win the general election.

Should Labour gain power, therefore, what will happen if Mr Blair, God forbid, falls under a bus?

Yours sincerely,

KENNETH SWINBURNE,
10 Foxhill Crescent, Westwood Lane,
Leeds, West Yorkshire,
April 20.

From Mr R. L. Clifford

Sir, Anatole Kaletsky is not correct in his assertion that the days are long gone when socialists believed that capitalism exists to expropriate the justly earned fruits of labour ("How Labour would try to change the ways of business", Business, April 18).

Capitalism still seeks to employ as few people as possible for as small a reward as the employer can get away with. All the transitions called "privatisation" have demonstrated that nothing changes.

I think Mr Kaletsky may have confused socialism with the beliefs of new Labour, which are, of course, not the same thing at all.

Yours faithfully,

R. L. CLIFFORD,
25 Deben Drive, Sudbury, Suffolk,
April 18.

From Mr Nigel G. Meek

Sir, Anatole Kaletsky (article, April 19) quotes a Labour Party adviser asking "Why was the Prussian Army better than the Italian Army?" The answer is simple: a rigidly hierarchical and authoritarian society, which inculcated in its citizens, from cradle to grave, an ethos of deference and blind obedience.

If this is the model upon which "new Labour" is to be based then it seems remarkably similar to "old Labour" socialism: top-down direction, contempt for individual choice and a devastating erosion of personal responsibility.

Yours faithfully,

N. G. MECK,
58 Burnt Ash Lane, Bromley, Kent,
April 19.

From Mr Gerald Kaufman, MP for Manchester, Gorton (Labour)

Sir, "It is ridiculous to compare Blair to Gaitskell", writes Woodrow Wyatt (April 23). Quite right.

Gaitskell tried to dump Clause Four of the Labour Party's constitution and failed. Blair decided to dump Clause Four and succeeded.

Gaitskell made advance commitments on tax which proved disastrous. Blair refuses to make advance commitments on tax and demonstrates prudence.

In his first and only general election as leader of the party, Gaitskell led Labour to a landslide defeat. In his first general election as party leader, Blair will lead Labour to the first of a series of victories.

Yours sincerely,

GERALD KAUFMAN,
House of Commons,
April 23.

From Mr Michael Smith

Sir, Why does Mr Mawhinney continue to expect us to believe that the Labour Party is the party of high taxation ("Prescott tells Short to toe line or resign", report, April 22)? It is certainly true that levels of income tax have come down under the Conservatives; but most Britons under this Government are mentally unable to believe that the Labour Party is actually paying today because they are paying it indirectly.

Indirect taxation is a wicked instrument of fiscal policy because it penalises everyone — including so-called middle-income earners. It is particularly insidious because it attacks the poor and families of all but the very highest income brackets, who are struggling to bring up children to support the next generation.

Whilst public ignorance of government taxation levels is clearly an advantage to Mr Mawhinney, he should not assume that the public will remain as ignorant of Conservative tax promises as they were in the last election. Let there be no mistake: there is only one party of high (and unfair) taxation and that is the party in government today.

Yours sincerely,

MICHAEL SMITH,
37 High Oak Road,
Ware, Hertfordshire,
April 22.

From Mr R. C. Littlefield

Sir, Now that it looks as if we might get a Labour government before too long, can you suggest what type of products I should begin to stockpile?

Yours faithfully,

R. C. LITTLEFIELD,
3 Welbeck Close,
Cove, Farnborough, Hampshire,
April 22.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

With Kenwood's interests at heart

From Mr George Levy and Lord Hutchinson of Lullington, QC

Sir, In your reports concerning the Friends of Kenwood AGM (April 15 and 18) Sir Jocelyn Stevens, Chairman of English Heritage, appears to question our credentials. Certain relevant facts should be placed on record regarding our status for expressing opinions.

In 1985, at the time of the abolition of the GLC, the Government made it clear that it wished English Heritage, as an administrative trustee of the Iveagh Bequest, to have an independent liaison group with them, representing the interests of the Friends of Kenwood and the other London historic house museums. The terms of reference for its ten members were "to liaise with English Heritage on matters of public concern affecting the management and organisation of the London Historic House Museums".

Sadly, Mr Julius Bryant, Director of Collections at English Heritage, does not mention in his letter of April 22 that until very recently English Heritage not only continued the GLC's excellent "administrative centre for the Historic Houses Division" at Kenwood but strengthened it by a specific Museums Division, also based there.

It is precisely English Heritage's decision to dismantle that division, substituting it with a managerial team in Oxford Street, with a curator only visiting Kenwood on average twice a week, that is the reason for all our concerns.

It is ironic that at the present moment, because of the Friends' unanimous view that there should either be a curator based at Kenwood or, at the very least, that English Heritage's director of collections should have authority over it, that Sir Jocelyn Stevens has forbidden his staff to even communicate with the liaison group.

We very much regret that Sir Jocelyn has sought to personalise our attempt to express these serious concerns felt by so many of those who have the interests of Kenwood at heart.

Human rights reform

From Sir Edward du Cann

Sir, The news that the European Community cannot accede to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (Law Report, April 16) coincides with the Lord Chancellor's timely visit to Strasbourg seeking reforms of the European Court of Human Rights (report, April 9).

There is some impatience in Britain at what Sir Michael Davies calls "the wider excesses" of the court (letter, April 17; see also letter, April 22). This impatience, sometimes merited, sometimes not, should not be allowed to obscure the significance of the Convention and its achievements.

The Convention stemmed from the universal wish after 1945 to provide a bulwark against totalitarian regimes and the continuing advance of communism. It was a statement of the principles of personal freedom and justice for which Western European states traditionally stood, Britain not least: a proper reaction to the serious violations of human rights which were the tragedy of Europe during the

Second World War.

Reforms may well be necessary in the European court, but the need for the Convention as a declaration of intent on the part of contracting parties is undeniable. Human rights are too often violated and in too many countries, not least in Europe itself, as we have so sickeningly observed in Yugoslavia.

The Convention is also an essential protection for individuals who, sadly, may find it difficult or impossible to obtain justice from their domestic courts — even in Britain. It is shameful that the European court has ruled against British justice more often than against any other signatory of the Convention.

Guarantees of human rights are only valuable when they are enforceable in national law. It should be a prime aim of British foreign policy to press other nations to sign the Convention and of domestic policy to assimilate the Convention into British law.

Yours faithfully,
EDWARD DU CANN,
11 Barton Street, SW1,
April 22.

From Mrs Elizabeth Battrick

Sir, In view of the reassessment of archaeological evidence from the old palace of Whitehall (report, April 16; letter, April 20) it is perhaps interesting to note that Henry VIII was not the only one to enjoy a Turkish bath in the Tudor era.

The Company of Mines Royal of Keswick, a German firm licensed by Queen Elizabeth to engage in copper mining, records in its accounts the building of a men's bathroom in March 1569. John Fisher of Keswick had the contract, which included digging the foundations and paving the floor. The men were to repay the expense out of club money and fines.

A contemporary historian, Fynes Morison, notes "the use of Baths is frequent in Germany... They have publick Stones or hott houses in each city".

Yours faithfully,
ELIZABETH BATTRICK,
Skiddaw Cottage,
Vicarage Hill, Keswick, Cumbria,
April 22.

From Mr Alan Blyth

Sir, It is odd that Sir John Burgh should choose this of all moments (letter, April 19) to draw attention to his National Opera Co-ordinating Committee when this very week Covent Garden and English National Opera (ENO) are presenting the same opera, *Tosca* — a prime example surely of a lack of co-ordination among our subsidised companies.

Yours faithfully,
ALAN BLYTH,
22 Shilling Street,
Lavenham, Suffolk,
April 21.

From Mr J. D. B. Read

Sir, The Royal Navy used to hold that one difference between the Services (letter, April 22) was illustrated by the jerseys worn at Twickenham for the Army-Navy game. The Army were reputed to play in red so that their blood would not show; the Navy turned out in blue for the same reason.

Yours faithfully,
JEREMY READ,
Downlands, Workhouse Lane,
East Meon, Petersfield, Hampshire,
April 22.

From Mr J. D. B. Read

Sir, Do Mr Giles Coren and Sir Hardy Amies ("The truth about Tony Blair's legs", April 19) consider if the behaviour of a gentleman to go around looking up other fellows' trouser legs?

Yours,
JASON AMESBURY,
J. Amesbury & Co
(Bespoke shoemakers),
32 Elder Street, E1,
April 19.

From Mr J. D. B. Read

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Yours faithfully,
JEREMY READ,
Downlands, Workhouse Lane,
East Meon, Petersfield, Hampshire,
April 22.

Business letters, page 29

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 0171-782-5046.

NEWS

Poll gives Tories glimmer of hope

■ People have at last started to feel more optimistic about the economic outlook and are more positive about John Major than at any time for three years, according to the latest MORI poll for *The Times*.

■ However, the shift in attitude has not yet changed voting intentions or the expectation that the Conservatives will suffer big losses in next week's council elections. Support for the Tories has remained at 28 per cent over the past month. **Page 1**

Major catches tide of EU protest

■ John Major told politicians pressing for withdrawal from the European Union that they were living in Cloud-cuckoo-land. But he responded to the rising tide of public and media disaffection with Brussels by signalling a hardening of British attitudes within the EU. **Pages 1, 11, 21, 25, 26, 29**

Threat to Adams

President Clinton is expected to sever relations with Gerry Adams if the IRA refuses to resume its ceasefire and disqualifies Sinn Féin from all-party talks on Ulster's future. **Page 2**

What the MP saw

A backbench Labour MP told the High Court that he spotted a journalist who is now one of Tony Blair's closest aides soliciting signatures on a hand-drafted parliamentary motion. **Page 3**

Nursery project

America's largest child care company is targeting 30 British towns to open dawn-to-dusk nurseries for children from six weeks old following heavy demand at a pilot centre in Cheshire. **Page 5**

Back on screen

The earliest surviving film made by Oliver Hardy is to have its first public screening for almost 80 years, after being rescued from a bonfire. **Page 6**

War hero honoured

The bravery of a wartime railwayman who prevented a trainload of bombs exploding has been recognised with the naming of a new garden in Ipswich. **Page 7**

Divorce warning

Tory backbenchers led the attack on the Government's divorce reforms, warning that they would cause a big increase in marital breakdowns. **Page 9**

The menace from outer space

■ Eros, an asteroid 15 miles long and twice the size of the one that killed the dinosaurs, may hit the Earth. The asteroid that landed 65 million years ago threw so much debris into the atmosphere that the climate was changed and vegetation died. A team of Italian-French scientists says a disaster is quite likely — but not for at least 100,000 years. **Page 1**



The Queen with the President of Mongolia, Punsalmaa Ochirbat, and his wife after his audience at Windsor Castle yesterday

Electric shock

The row over restructuring the industry looks set to continue despite the blocking of the generators' bids. **Page 25**

Telecom threat

The proposed £35 billion merger between Cable and Wireless and BT hit a new obstacle after a warning from C&W's powerful German partner. **Page 25**

Telegraph move

Conrad Black has moved to assume full control of Telegraph newspapers with a £763 million offer for the 36 per cent of the company which is publicly owned. **Page 25**

Markets

The FT-SE 100 index fell 15.4 to 3,817.6. Sterling's trade-weighted index was unchanged at 84.0 after a dip from \$1.5146 to \$1.5128 and a rise from DM2.2990 to DM2.3022. **Page 28**

Football

The Republic of Ireland lost 2-0 to the Czech Republic in Prague. The goals came in the second half from Martin Frydrek and Pavel Kuka. **Page 48**

Snooker

Terry Griffiths, a veteran of 18 world championships, has never been involved in a more dramatic finish than his 10-9 victory over Jamie Burnett in this year's first round. **Page 46**

Athletics

Colin Jackson withdrew his threat to boycott some of Britain's top meetings this summer. **Page 43**

Rugby league

Shaun McRae, the St Helens coach, accused his Bradford counterpart of "living in Disneyland" over Bradford's starting line-up for the Silk Cut Challenge Cup final. **Page 43**

Rip-roaring Richard

New films include a rip-roaring screen adaptation of *Richard III*, set in the Thirties with Ian McKellen playing the title role, and *The Birdcage*, a remake of *La Cage aux folles* with Robin Williams. **Page 33**

Prince on the run

Peter Whelan's fine new play at the Birmingham Rep, *Divine Right*, portrays an heir to the throne wandering incognito round middle England. **Page 35**

Tosca refreshed

A dull Covent Garden production of *Tosca* has been freshened up by a fine new cast, including the fast-rising British baritone Anthony Michaels-Moore singing Scarpia. **Page 35**

New on video

The space thriller *Apollo 13* is among the new videos. **Page 34**

Going, gone

New York's sale of the century — the auction of Jackie Kennedy Onassis's jewellery and objets d'art. **Page 19**

Daycare

A mother explains why her child goes to nursery school and a teacher looks at what's best for children. **Page 18**

Dr Thomas Stutland

On the real results of X-rays. **Page 18**

French leave

Tour operators to France are continuing to cut prices in the hope of luring British holidaymakers. **Pages 38, 39**

Coming down

Frequent-flyer bonus schemes might be phased out. **Pages 38, 39**

Writers behind the writing

Peter Ackroyd on Bernard Shaw; Valerie Grove on Djuna Barnes; Derwent May on the diaries of Anthony Powell. **Pages 36, 37**

The Olive Tree

Romano Prodi and the financial markets are in honeymoon phase. If this opportunity is not to be wasted, Italy needs a clear sign that it is on course for monetary union and participation in the euro by 2002. The new coalition must show firm determination to bind us closer to our European allies. **— La Stampa**

Preview: Why would anybody want to be a police officer for nothing? *Cutting Edge: Special Force* (Channel 4, 9pm). Review: Peter Barnard is captivated by Margherita Fracanzani. **Page 47**

Book of chances

John Major's policy towards Europe remains a precarious straddle between opposing positions. It is not only the Euro-skeptics who think this policy cannot hold. **Page 21**

Stranger than Aum

Japan is the most law-abiding of countries; the trauma of the Aum Shinrikyo sect will linger long after this bizarre trial has become history. **Page 21**

Ring of brown water

The Reading otters would be wise to colonise upstream rather than down to London, at any rate until the millennium party is over. Being such slippery survivors, they will. **Page 21**

MAGNUS LINKLATER

Sunday has become a highly productive day for politicians and news managers, a seedbed for the day's headlines. For those who relish the swordplay of party politics it is all good fun — not much blood shed, but a very satisfying clang of steel on steel. **Page 20**

PETER RIDDELL

Many Labour supporters regard the next election as primarily an opportunity to end the long Tory era rather than as the start of the New Jerusalem. Expectations are low, and have been deliberately lowered by Tony Blair to avoid later disappointment. **Page 9**

JOHN BRYANT

A touch of flamboyant mockery of an opponent who has mucked things up is nothing new in sport. Some games even have it deep in their make-up. **Page 46**

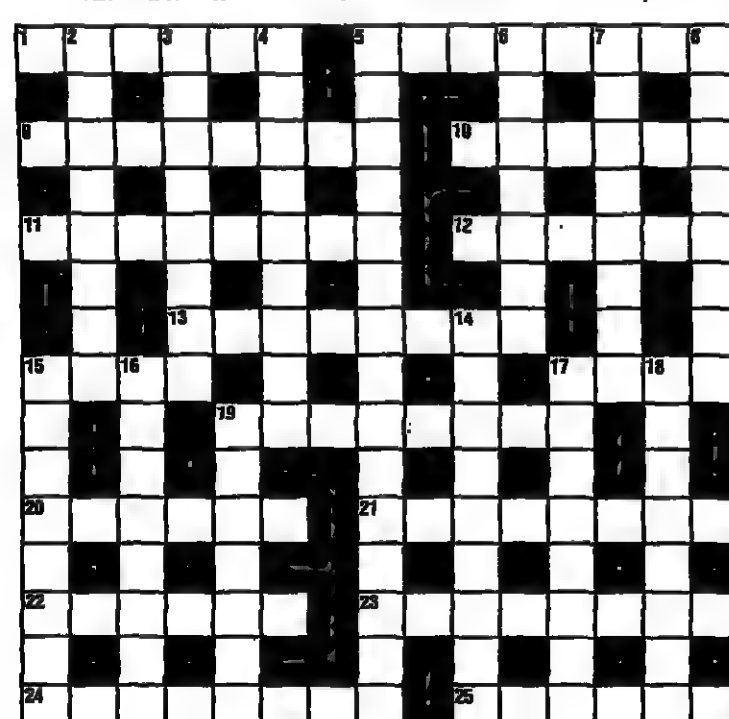
Sir Michael Joughin

electronic chairman; David Shipman; King historian; Sam Schoenbaum; Shakespearean scholar; Jo Parry; journalist. **Page 3**

Labour policies; friends of Kenwood

Thought for the Day; human rights. **Page 21**

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,151



- ACROSS**
- This stops drunkard eating pork (6).
 - Soft food and hard available for dog (8).
 - Stop being full of vice (3-5).
 - Beetle can be irritating (3,3).
 - Report of a shot at the wicket (8).
 - One's retreating, having advanced without a sound (6).
 - Suitable postulate held by primate (8).
 - Head started losing heart (4).
 - Play from Pinero — taking part (4).
 - A pointer to abuse of deadly drug (8).
 - The cloth originally called loden employed rather greenish yarn (6).
- DOWN**
- William Tell had to acknowledge applause (4,1,3).
 - It flies round one, in part (6).
 - Have lines inside, with edges joined together (8).
 - Charm — it briefly attracts wild animals (8).
 - He got fatally nailed with girl in family demanding date (6).
 - Condemn unheard small book held up by *falso* (8).
 - Christian girl I spare (8).
 - Fix hose to bag (5,4).
 - Make a firm decision to go faster (3,4,4,4).
 - I do not approve of Egyptian picture (7).
 - Book from Liberal upset relatively passionate Cockney (8).
 - Patching damaged headgear (8).
 - Pathead's stupidity (9).
 - Withdraw cash invested, resulting in power cut (8).
 - Main antenna receiving radio telegraphy (8).
 - Poor sales rep gets worse (8).
 - RAF woman trained in martial craft (3-2-3).
 - Messenger states devotion (7).
- Solution to Puzzle No 20,150**
- PAPYRUS VESPER
LULUAI RU
SWANSDOWN GOURD
ETITRU
TUTTIL TASMANIAN
AEGUITE
BREATHLESSNESS
PITATE
SKATEBOATHUNICE
ALGOTUA
LIMITLESS IDLER
TCHOMLO
ERNIE COOPERATE
RETAPOIN
YARDARM ENTREAT

TIMES WEATHERCALL

For regional forecast, call 091 500 followed by code.

Code	Region	Forecast
701	Greater London	Cloudy
702	Kent, Surrey, Sussex	Cloudy
703	Devon & Cornwall	Cloudy
704	Wiltshire, Gloucestershire, Somerset	Cloudy
705	West Midlands	Cloudy
706	Staffordshire, Cheshire	Cloudy
707	North West	Cloudy
708	North East	Cloudy
709	Yorkshire, Lincolnshire	Cloudy
710	East Midlands	Cloudy
711	East of England	Cloudy
712	London & Home Counties	Cloudy
713	Wales	Cloudy
714	Wales & Cheshire	Cloudy
715	Wales & Cheshire	Cloudy
716	Wales & Cheshire	Cloudy
717	Wales & Cheshire	Cloudy
718	Wales & Cheshire	Cloudy
719	Wales & Cheshire	Cloudy
720	Wales & Cheshire	Cloudy
721	Wales & Cheshire	Cloudy
722	Wales & Cheshire	Cloudy
723	Wales & Cheshire	Cloudy
724	Wales & Cheshire	Cloudy
725	Wales & Cheshire	Cloudy
726	Wales & Cheshire	Cloudy
727	Wales & Cheshire	Cloudy

AA ROADWATCH

For AA traffic reports, call 0300 4011 followed by code.

Code	Route	Report
721	London & Home Counties	Clear
722	London & Home Counties	Clear
723	London & Home Counties	Clear
724	London & Home Counties	Clear
725	London & Home Counties	Clear
726	London & Home Counties	Clear
727	London & Home Counties	Clear

HOURS OF DARKNESS

Day	1st quarter	Full moon	3rd quarter	New moon
London	8.14 pm to 5.42 am	8.24 pm to 5.55 am	8.34 pm to 6.05 am	8.44 pm to 6.15 am
Edinburgh	8.24 pm to 5.55 am	8.34 pm to 6.05 am	8.44 pm to 6.15 am	8.54 pm to 6.25 am
Manchester	8.34 pm to 6.05 am	8.44 pm to 6.15 am	8.54 pm to 6.25 am	9.04 pm to 6.35 am

FORECAST

General: England and Wales will start misty fine and dry. Southern areas should remain fine and warm, if increasingly cloudy. The northwest will become increasingly cloudy with patchy rain. Scotland and Northern Ireland will start mostly fine and dry, some rain likely in the far northwest. Thickening cloud will bring outbreaks of rain from the west. Remaining mild.

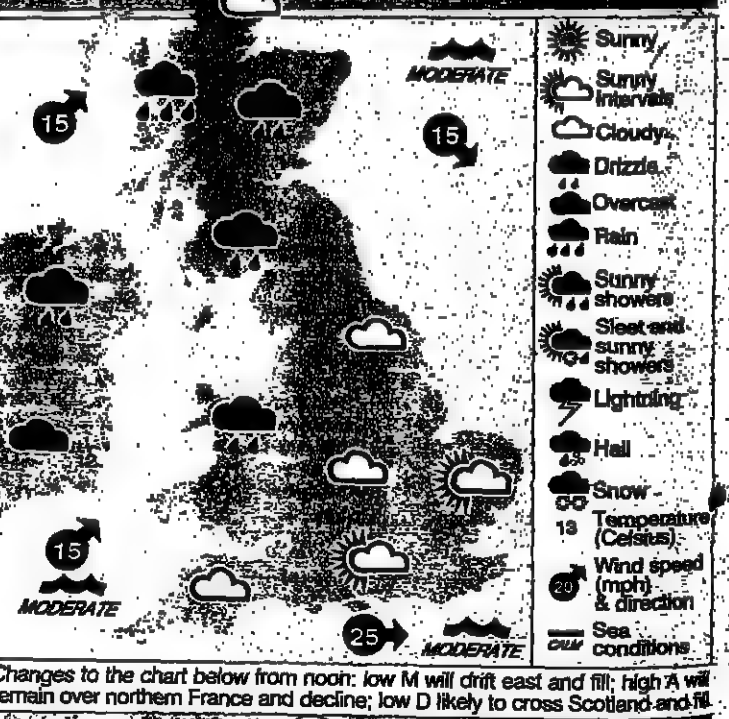
London, SE England, E Anglia, Central S England, E Midlands, E England, Charnel (seas): mostly fine and dry, sunnier in the morning. Winds light, west then southwest. Quite warm, max 16C (61F).

W Midlands, SW England, S Wales, Central N, NE England: mostly dry with early sunshine, cloudy later with patchy drizzle. Winds light or moderate, mainly west or southwest. Max 14C (57F).

AROUND BRITAIN

Area	Forecast
North East	Cloudy
North West	Cloudy
Yorkshire	Cloudy
East of England	Cloudy
Wales	Cloudy
Scotland	Cloudy
Ireland	Cloudy

CHANGES TO THE CHART BELOW FROM NOON: LOW M WILL DRIFT EAST AND FILL; HIGH A WILL REMAIN OVER NORTHERN FRANCE AND DECLINE; LOW D LIKELY TO CROSS SCOTLAND AND N.



Changes to the chart below from noon: low M will drift east and fill; high A will remain over northern France and decline; low D likely to cross Scotland and N.

Area	Forecast
North East	Cloudy
North West	Cloudy
Yorkshire	Cloudy
East of England	Cloudy
Wales	Cloudy
Scotland	Cloudy
Ireland	Cloudy

AGROAD

Area	Forecast
North East	Cloudy
North West	Cloudy
Yorkshire	Cloudy
East of England	Cloudy
Wales	Cloudy
Scotland	Cloudy
Ireland	Cloudy

Temperatures at midday local time on Tuesday, X = not available

The outlook in Bermuda is heavenly.
For our 1996 brochure, call Bermuda Tourism on 01753 517 517 quoting ref: TWS or see your travel agent.

ANATOMY
The sin
is start
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Further

Lang
fails

power

Veba three
and C&W

Littlewo



ANATOLE KALETSKY 29
The single currency is starting to look inevitable



BOOKS 36, 37
Peter Ackroyd on the ascent of Bernard Shaw



SPORT 43-48
John Bryant on the rebel who sought applause

PRICE CUTS TO FRANCE
Travel 38, 39

THE TIMES

BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

THURSDAY APRIL 25 1996

Further industry moves expected despite blocking of bids

Lang decision fails to end power turmoil

BY CHRISTINE BUCKLEY

THE dispute over the restructuring of the electricity industry looks set to continue in spite of the decision by Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, to block the bids for regional electricity companies by National Power and PowerGen, the UK power generators.

His ruling that the two proposals to combine generation and distribution in electricity should not proceed, was swiftly followed by indications from Stephen Littlechild, the industry regulator, that he could look favourably on plans by the Hanson conglomerate to buy power stations from National Power and PowerGen.

Those deals, worth more than £2 billion for six megawatts of plant, would create a big, vertically integrated company because Eastern, the division of Hanson, is already the country's largest supplier of electricity with more than three million customers. But Professor Littlechild, who had vehemently opposed the mergers of National Power with Southern Electric and PowerGen with Midlands Electricity, said that Eastern was a different matter. "This would not be on the same scale as National Power or PowerGen, which have a large share of the market," he said. "Another medium-sized player would contribute to competition."

Both the large generators were forced to sell plant by Professor Littlechild to encourage new generators into the market, where currently Nat-

ional Power and PowerGen command huge sway over the wholesale price of electricity.

The principle of vertical integration was not rejected by Mr Lang, in what has been widely interpreted as a political decision to fend off criticism of the Government's handling of electricity privatisation. That, along with Professor Littlechild's keenness to see plant disposed of quickly, could herald more cross-generation/distribution moves. British Energy, the nuclear power group being floated in the summer, is known to be keen to expand into distribution and would probably want to move ahead

Lang blocks bid Pennington 27

of a possible change in Government.

Mr Lang's rejection of the bids adds further uncertainty to the next moves of Southern Company of the US, which made an approach on National Power last week. The prospect of an overseas owner for Britain's largest generator brought a flurry of concern from consumer groups and raised the political temperature when John Redwood and Norman Lamont weighed into the debate.

Southern (US), whose overseas chief executive, Tom Boren, has been in London for the past few weeks, has yet to make a fresh statement after National Power rebuffed a

request for talks about talks. But industry watchers do not believe the company, which is a key player in the US, was naive enough to approach the UK generator without being aware of regulatory hurdles and the prospect of a hostile reaction.

The company was the first US utility to move on the UK market when it bought Sweb, the south-western regional company, in a hostile bid. Ownership of Sweb could be seen to harm its regulatory chances in bidding for a generator, but Southern has indicated it wants to sell up to half its interest in Sweb.

Investors in privatised power stocks saw around £1 billion wiped off the value of their companies as the Government blocked the bid plans. The share price of National Power dropped 32p to 564p and that of PowerGen 36p to 570p. The biggest victims of the fallout, however, were shares in Southern Electric and Midlands Electricity, with Southern falling 79p to 824p and Midlands 40p to 371p.

Special dividends worth more than £1 billion could be on the cards for investors in the generators, as the electricity companies come under pressure to return some value to shareholders, who saw their holdings crumble on Mr Lang's decision.

Nigel Hawkins, utilities analyst at Yamaichi, said: "Both generators are now faced with a pressing need to restructure their balance sheets and deliver some value."



Power players: Tom Boren, left, of Southern (US), and Professor Stephen Littlechild



Ian Lang, whose ruling was seen as a political decision to fend off privatisation criticism

Barings boss faces SFA ban

BY ROBERT MILLER

THE disciplinary case brought by a senior City watchdog against Peter Norris, the chief executive officer of Barings at the time of the £860 million crash, is expected to be concluded next week.

The Securities and Futures Authority (SFA), the regulator for brokers and futures dealers, will announce that Mr Norris has accepted a three-year ban from certain senior SFA registers and agreed to pay costs of about £10,000.

Mr Norris, who declined to comment yesterday, is now a non-executive director of John Brown, the publishing house that produces *Viz* and *Gardens Illustrated*.

Mr Norris, who is due to give evidence on the Barings crash to the Commons Treasury Select Committee next month, is the first of the nine remaining disciplinary cases brought by the SFA to be completed.

All have been charged with failing to act with due skill, care and diligence in monitoring the bogus trading activities of Nick Leeson on the Far East money markets. Peter Baring, the former chairman of the 233-year old merchant bank, and his deputy, Andrew Tuckey, have also been summoned to give evidence at the Commons.

Five others are understood to be in discussions with the SFA over penalties ranging from a three-year ban from senior SFA registers to a severe limitation on the work they may undertake in the securities industry.

The remaining three former Barings executives, Mary Wolt, global head of equity products, Ron Baker, who set up the Debt Financial Products Group, and Ian Hopkins, who was in charge of group treasury and risk, are understood to have refused to accept the SFA verdicts on their professional conduct and are making appeals.

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES			
FT-SE 100	3817.8	(-15.4)	
Yield	3.89%		
FT-SE All Share	1812.25	(-4.84)	
Nikkei	22282.05	(+182.17)	
Dow Jones	5553.54	(-35.05)	
S&P Composite	850.02	(-1.56)	
US RATE			
Federal Funds	5 1/4%	(5 1/4%)	
Long Bond	80 1/4	(80 1/4)	
Yield	6.77%	(6.79%)	
LONDON MONEY			
3-month interbank	8 1/4%	(8 1/4%)	
6-month bill	10 1/4%	(10 1/4%)	
9-month bill	10 1/4%	(10 1/4%)	
STERLING			
New York	1.6140*	(1.6188)	
London	1.5128	(1.5141)	
Frankfurt	2.3024	(2.2987)	
Paris	7.7754	(7.7785)	
Yen	166.95	(165.92)	
Yen	161.54	(161.21)	
£ Index	95.8	(94.0)	
DOLLAR			
London	1.5214*	(1.5220)	
Frankfurt	5.1350*	(5.1403)	
Paris	1.2323*	(1.2338)	
Yen	106.80*	(106.71)	
£ Index	95.8	(94.0)	
Tokyo close Yen 108.70			
BRENT 15-day (L/L) \$18.05 (\$18.25)			
LONDON close \$380.80 (\$382.05)			
* denotes midday trading price			

Australian boost
Bank of Scotland proved that its decision to build up an Australian business instead of following the recent trend of banks to buy building societies had paid off after it unveiled a 21 per cent advance in full year profits.
Page 27, *Tempos* 28

EU block
The European Commission has blocked Lomrho and Genor from creating a new platinum giant because of fears that the company and its only rival, Anglo American, would use their stranglehold to fix prices.
Page 30, *Tempos* 28

Veba threat to BT and C&W merger

BY ERIC REGULY

THE proposed £35 billion merger between Cable and Wireless and BT hit a new obstacle yesterday when it emerged that Veba, C&W's powerful German partner, has given warning that it will not support the merger if its interests are sacrificed.

Veba, one of Germany's largest industrial groups, owns 10.5 per cent of C&W and has formed two telecom joint ventures with C&W in Europe. Vebacom, the larger of the two, is to become the main competitor to Deutsche Telekom after the market is deregulated in 1998.

Veba fears that BT will insist that its own joint venture in Germany, known as Viag Interkom, will emerge as the preferred German partner of a C&W-BT group.

Vebacom and Viag Interkom, whose half owner is Viag, the German utility, are competitors and realise that only one of them would have a role in the enlarged group.

BT and C&W admit privately that finding a solution to the

German question is one of the key issues to be resolved before their merger can proceed. A formal merger agreement is expected within weeks.

Neither Veba nor Viag appear willing to bow out gracefully. Hannelore Gantzer, a Viag spokeswoman, said: "We are confident that we will be the ones that survive."

Viag noted that it and BT continued to work on expanding their German partnership even after BT and C&W began talks last year. In February, BT and Viag announced their intention to bring RWE, another German utility, into the Viag Interkom joint venture.

People close to the merger talks said that Viag might might take legal action for breach of its partnership contract, or try to extract a large payment from BT, if Viag Interkom is squeezed out.

Veba appears to have the upper hand because it owns a significant stake of C&W and has a seat on the C&W board.

Hitch at the altar, page 29

IoD rejects a single currency

BRITAIN'S company directors yesterday gave strong support to Euroscepticism by voting heavily to reject the UK joining a European single currency. The annual conference of the Institute of Directors (IoD) also overwhelmingly backed the UK's opt-out from the European social chapter on employment standards.

Both moves, but especially the single currency vote, back what even pro-European business leaders now acknowledge is a growing Euroscepticism in British business. UK business bodies have been divided over Europe, with organisations such as the Confederation of British Industry more overtly pro-European, while bodies such as the IoD have been more sceptical.

A vote at the end of the IoD debate showed 69 per cent against a single currency, and 28 per cent in favour.

Major speaks out, page 1
What kind of EU? page 11
Conference, page 26
City Diary, page 29

Telegraph agrees £763m takeover

BY ALASDAIR MURRAY

CONRAD BLACK, chairman of Hollinger, the Canadian publishing group, yesterday moved to assume full control of Telegraph newspapers with a £763 million offer for the 36 per cent of the company which is publicly owned.

Hollinger also hinted at a further easing in the newspaper price war by stating that it intended to lift the cover price of *The Daily Telegraph* when conditions are "appropriate". The paper now costs 40p as opposed to 48p before the price war began in 1993.

In a deal agreed with the Telegraph board, Hollinger is offering 500p a share and a special dividend of 10p a share to Telegraph shareholders. Hollinger added that Telegraph shareholders could be in line for a further payout if the company disposes of its 25 per cent stake in Fairfax, the Australian newspaper group, within the next two years.

Hollinger has approached the new Australian Government, before a review of newspaper ownership laws,

giving warning that it will sell its stake in Fairfax if Mr Black is unable to increase his holding in the company.

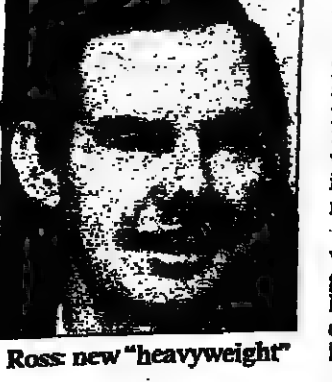
Kerry Packer, who already owns a 17 per cent stake in Fairfax, and Tony O'Reilly's APN newspaper group are understood to be interested in buying the stake if Hollinger decides to sell. But industry experts believe Hollinger's threat is largely bluff as the Fairfax group includes some of the most profitable titles in the world. Shares in the Telegraph rose 90p to 569p, just below the offer price.

Hollinger upset the City two years ago after the group sold 12.5 million shares in the Telegraph just one month before the share price plummeted 35 per cent after the decision to cut cover prices.

Although Hollinger bought back millions of shares after the fall, an earlier attempt to take the company private floundered because the company was unable to agree a price with the Telegraph board.

Littlewoods chairman to quit at AGM

BY JON ASHWORTH



THE Littlewoods pools-to-retailing empire was plunged into fresh controversy yesterday, when it announced that Leonard van Geest, chairman for the past six years, is to quit at next month's annual meeting. His successor is James Ross, who was ousted from Cable and Wireless in November after a damaging boardroom rift.

Mr van Geest appears to be the latest victim of the in-fighting which has gripped members of the controlling Moores family. Barry Dale, the former chief executive, was fired a year ago, and later returned with a troublesome £12

billion takeover bid for the company. Littlewoods recently disclosed a 16 per cent fall in pre-tax profits.

Littlewoods insisted yesterday that the parting was amicable, but conceded that Mr van Geest, 46, had agreed to make way for a "heavyweight" chairman with an expanded role. He earned £225,000 in 1994, and is likely to command at least as much in compensation.

The company said: "The changes will lead to a clear separation between ownership and management issues and to adjustments in the structure of the board and the responsibilities of its members. These new developments are designed to introduce clarity and best

practice in the governance of Littlewoods and improve the performance of all the businesses."

Mr van Geest as much as acknowledged his past difficulties when he said: "I am confident that my successor will benefit from having a more clearly defined role and greater responsibilities."

A Littlewoods spokesman added: "He recognised that we have widened the scope of the job."

Mr Ross, who was chief executive of Cable and Wireless for four years, said he was looking forward to leading Littlewoods into a new era.

Pennington, page 27

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THE INSTITUTE OF DIRECTORS' ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Rejection for single European currency

BUSINESS leaders at the Institute of Directors annual conference yesterday overwhelmingly rejected Britain's participation in a single European currency. By voting to reject it the conference in London supported the strongly Eurosceptical line of the institute's leadership.

In place of a traditional business conference format, IoD leaders decided to devote the whole of the institute's conference to Europe, and arranged debates on two key issues of a single currency and a social chapter, with speakers both for and against. Arguing against a single currency,

block modernisation of developing states such as Estonia and Portugal, while structural differences, such as the way pension funds are financed, would cause huge strains.

But Georges Jacobs, chairman of the Federation of Belgian Industry, said that as a pragmatic businessman, he saw five reasons why a single currency would be in the UK's long term interest.

Business accounting would be simplified, and currency conversion costs of £18 billion a year saved, he said. Britain's sovereignty over its economy would rise, because it would have a say in European monetary policy, rather than be dominated by decisions of the Bundesbank, as at present. Prices would be more stable, and interest rates lower, because the economy would be well managed. Trade would be promoted by exchange-rate stability and the single market would work better.

Alan Beith, deputy leader of the Liberal Democrats, waved a £5 note issued in 1949 — worth 29p today, to illustrate the way Britain's currency had been devalued. Backing the case for monetary union, he said bond markets did not believe Britain had broken its cycle of surging inflation followed by rising interest rates. "We sound like Elizabeth Taylor after her eighth marriage, saying 'this time it will be different', nobody believes us."

A clear majority of speakers from the floor opposed a single currency, with seven against and three in favour. Business speakers said a single currency would hit UK business hard, and transfer control of Britain's economic policy-making to other EU countries.

Lord Tebbit, a former Trade and Industry Secretary, said monetary union was simply a stepping-stone for politicians seeking a federal Europe.

He said: "The single currency is not about economics, it is about politics, and since when has subordinating politics to economics done anyone any good?" Quoting William Gladstone, the former Prime Minister, he said: "The finances of this country are intimately associated with the liberty of this country." But joining a currency union undermines the ability of countries to adjust their economic policies to national needs. "The political risk would be incalculable."

Lord Tebbit was backed by Sir John Hoskyns, a former IoD Director-General and founder of Hoskyns Group, who said: "I believe the single currency project will do business enormous damage." Combining currencies would



Chapter and verse: Sir Stanley Kalms said flexible employment laws suited both sides

Social chapter is given short shrift

LEADERS of the IoD massively rejected the European social chapter and insisted on the Government's retaining of its opt-out from Europe-wide employment regulation.

Peter Lilley, the Social Security Secretary, said that legislation could not create more or better jobs — only business could do that. Regulations

destroyed jobs, he told business leaders: "We need to keep government off your backs, so that you can put your backs into creating jobs. Europe hasn't done that."

The Conservative Government has made the UK job market "the most lightly regulated, lowest social cost labour market in Europe. As a result

EMPLOYMENT

our unemployment is now below the level every other major European country — and falling.

Signing the social chapter, he said, would be particularly damaging to Britain. Europe would harmonise to the most onerous, rigid and costly employment regime, and the move would give more power to the unions in Britain. Employment laws, too, would not be uniformly observed.

John Monks, TUC General Secretary, warned company

UK prospects are bright, says Major

JOHN MAJOR, the Prime Minister, proclaimed Britain's economic prospects as "bright" on the basis of new survey evidence from company directors in the UK signalling a potential upturn in growth, with orders, output, profits and jobs all rising.

The findings of the latest business trends survey from the IoD contrast sharply with the results of the latest Confederation of British Industry, which this week painted its gloomiest recent picture of the state of the UK economy.

Privately, IoD leaders were surprised at how positive were the results of the survey — the first since being turned down by a bi-monthly report to a quarterly study in line with other large-scale business surveys.

While they refused to accept that its findings might have been influenced by the methodological changes, the alterations make impossible comparisons with previous IoD surveys and emphasised the need to consider its results over time after a number of surveys in the new format have been carried out.

They emphasised that because the survey included the more buoyant service sector, rather than just the CBI's manufacturing base, its results reflected a better industrial spread.

Welcoming the findings, Mr Major told the conference in

London: "The survey confirms what many of us have felt for some time — that the economic prospects are bright. They will get brighter, and, increasingly, we have a lot to be positive about in this country."

Lord Young, IoD president, proclaimed the survey's findings as signalling the return of the long sought for "feel-good" factor in the economy.

The IoD's survey of 500 company directors showed a strong company performance over the past three months. The institute suggested its results were consistent with a forecast of 2.5 per cent growth in the

THE ECONOMY

economy this year. IoD analysts suggested the Chancellor and the Bank of England might have to raise interest rates to restrain economic growth, although they said that there were dangers in the possibility of a substantial stock correction and a prolonged recession in Europe.

A balance of 69 per cent of directors felt their company was performing well. Demand was quite strong, with a balance of 29 per cent reporting above-normal order books.

Employment had seen a "significant increase" over the past three months, but 27 per cent said overall costs had been rising.

group, said he was firmly opposed to the social chapter. "There are bad employers, but laws won't get rid of them," he said. "Most employers in this country are good employers. They can't afford not to be." Flexible employment laws and part-time working suited companies and employees alike. The social chapter is wrong in principle and wrong in practice, and it won't work — and those without work will never forgive us if we accept it."

REPORTS BY PHILIP BASSETT AND ROSS TIEMAN

USAir cuts losses to \$32.3m

USAir, which is 25 per cent owned by British Airways, has recorded a net loss of \$32.3 million in the first quarter of this year.

Stephen Wolf, the new chairman, said that he was disappointed with the result in a quarter when other airlines had reported record profits. It is, however, an improvement on the \$42 million loss reported by the company at the same time last year.

Mr Wolf said that business was lower than normal in January and February because of harsh winter weather. March had seen a return to a normal level. There was a rise in revenues from \$1.8 billion to \$1.9 billion.

Youard quits

Richard Youard, the investment ombudsman for Imro, the watchdog for fund managers, is to be replaced by Peter Dean, deputy chairman of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

Stake rises

Amersham International, the UK-based health science group, is to buy a further 30 per cent stake in Nihon Medi-Physics, the Japanese nuclear medicine company, spending £51.4 million to achieve joint ownership with NMP's parent company, Sumitomo Chemicals.

Lloyds appeal

Lloyds Bank last night said that it wanted time to consider a High Court judgment concerning its £4 billion staff pension scheme that could cost around £100 million.

PNE in black

Preston North End, the Alternative Investment Market-listed football club, has reported pre-tax profits of £42,000 (£217,000 loss) in the six months to December 31.

Argos signed

Burford Holdings, the property group, has signed up Argos, the catalogue retail group, for a 400,000 sq ft centre on the Heywood Distribution Park near Manchester.

FINANCIAL NEWS FROM BANK OF SCOTLAND

Bank of Scotland Annual Results

	1996	1995
TOTAL PROFIT FROM GROUP OPERATIONS BEFORE PROVISIONS	£706.4m	£650.0m
PROFIT BEFORE TAXATION	£545.0m	£449.7m
TOTAL CAPITAL RESOURCES	£3,533m	£2,731m
TOTAL ASSETS	£44,099m	£34,104m
EARNINGS PER ORDINARY STOCK UNIT	25.8p	22.3p
DIVIDEND PER ORDINARY STOCK UNIT	6.85p	5.82p

- Total profit from Group operations before provisions a record £706.4 million
- Profit before taxation up 21 per cent on 1995
- Dividend increased by 17.7 per cent
- Cost: Income ratio 52.1 per cent



For a copy of the Bank's Annual Report contact the Marketing Services and Public Relations Department, Bank of Scotland, Usher House, PO Box 12, 61 Grassmarket, Edinburgh EH1 2JF.

MP attacks society over income plans

By ROBERT MILLER

A CONSERVATIVE MP yesterday attacked a Midlands building society as "an utter disgrace" over its selling of unsuitable home income plans to elderly investors.

William Powell, MP for Corby, who has campaigned for compensation for people who, in the 1980s, were sold stock market-based plans subsequently banned by City authorities, singled out the West Bromwich Building Society for particular criticism.

Mr Powell said many people had been left with debt of £20,000 each, in spite of the Investors Compensation Scheme

paying some compensation. He told the Commons: "I indict the management and the directors of the West Bromwich for behaviour and conduct which can only be described as an utter disgrace." The society had tried to "stifle criticism by the use of writs". Angela Knight, Economic Secretary to the Treasury, said: "I will continue to do all that is within my power... to see the issue resolved."

The West Bromwich last night accused Mr Powell of relaunching "a stale campaign" and said his speech was littered with "inaccuracies".

Siemens' income up 15%

SOARING sales in Asia-Pacific and Eastern Europe helped to boost half-year results from Siemens, the German electronics company (Clare Stewart writes). Lower restructuring costs also contributed to the 15 per cent rise in net income to DM1.08 billion in the period to March this year.

The strength of international markets helped to offset

weakness in Germany where sales fell by 5 per cent against last year. By comparison Asia-Pacific saw a 20 per cent sales growth, with a 45 per cent increase in Eastern Europe, resulting in a 6 per cent sales growth worldwide to DM42.3 billion.

Strong growth in orders was recorded by Siemens communications division, as well as in power generation, where orders rose by 16 per cent.

Gilts issue in demand

Bank of England officials breathed a sigh of relief after safely seeing away the first gilts issue of the new fiscal year. The £3 billion sale by auction of 7½ per cent Treasury Stock 2006 yesterday was almost three times oversubscribed, predominantly by fund managers although private investors contributed nearly £2 million to the new issue.

Fears had been expressed within the City and at the Treasury that a £3 billion issue was over-ambitious but the market showed a surprising appetite for the government IOUs. Last year's gilts auctions raised £31.1 billion, with the final one raising a similar amount to yesterday's issue. The next is due on May 29.

TOURIST RATES

	Bank Buys	Bank Sells
Australia \$	2.02	1.86
Austria Sch	17.28	15.78
Canada \$	50.35	46.06
Cyprus Cyp£	0.755	0.700
Denmark Kr	9.51	8.71
Finland Mk	7.28	7.20
France Fr	8.20	7.55
Germany Dm	2.48	2.25
Greece Dr	364.00	350.00
Hong Kong \$	12.37	11.37
Ireland P£	1.02	0.94
Israel Sh	5.200	4.580
Italy Lira	2480.00	2511.00
Japan Yen	175.50	169.50
Malta	0.955	0.940
Netherlands Gld	2.753	2.508
New Zealand \$	2.37	2.15
Norway Kr	10.51	9.71
Portugal Esc	247.50	228.00
S Africa Rd	6.94	6.14
Spain Ptas	160.00	150.00
Sweden Kr	10.55	10.05
Switzerland Fr	2.00	1.82
Turkey Lira	1107.5	1027.5
USA \$	1.913	1.885

Rates for small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Different rates apply to traveller's cheques. Rates as of close of trading yesterday.

This notice is issued in compliance with the requirements of London Stock Exchange Limited (the 'London Stock Exchange'). A Prospectus relating to Aberforth Smaller Companies Trust plc dated 24 April 1996 has been published. Application has been made for all of the 'C' Shares of Aberforth Smaller Companies Trust plc to be listed on the Official List. It is expected that admission will become effective and that dealings in the 'C' Shares will commence on 22 May 1996.



Aberforth Smaller Companies Trust plc

(Incorporated in Scotland under the Companies Act 1985 with registered number 126524)

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Aberforth Smaller Companies Trust plc has received irrevocable undertakings to apply for in aggregate 65,000,000 'C' Shares in the Placing, applications in pursuance of which will be accepted in full. The Offer for Subscription for up to 10,000,000 'C' Shares will be available for subscription by existing shareholders and warrant holders and the public. Applications (which should each be for a minimum of 250,000 'C' Shares (making a minimum subscription per application of £250,000) except in the case of market makers) should be received by not later than 10.00 a.m. on 15 May 1996.

Copies of the Prospectus and application forms for use in the Offer for Subscription can be obtained during normal business hours on any weekday (excluding Saturdays and public holidays) up to and including 15 May 1996 from:

Aberforth Partners
14 Melville Street
Edinburgh EH3 7NS

Dickson Minto W.S.
Royal London House
22-25 Finsbury Square
London EC2A 1DS

In addition, copies of the Prospectus can be obtained, by collection only, for two business days from the date of this notice from the Company Announcements Office, the London Stock Exchange, London Stock Exchange Tower, Capel Court, London EC2.

Dickson Minto W.S. is regulated by the Law Society of Scotland

25 April 1996

Handwritten signature or mark at the bottom of the page.

□ Fallout from Lang's electric shocker □ Reform of archaic shareholder regulations □ Still more to do at Spurs

A smell of burnt insulation

□ ANY political decision that upsets several hundred thousand people is a courageous one. Ian Lang cannot be faulted for lack of courage, therefore, as he backs his way out of the National Power impasse.

The blocking of two bids yesterday is clearly a political decision, no matter how it is dressed up with references to the public interest, and it seems designed to keep National Power out of America hands. Those thousands of investors in Southern and Midlands are not going to get their money now, and those in other regional electricity companies stand a rather smaller chance of being taken over. The putting together of a generator and a distributor, ahead of the coming of the competitive market in 1998 that allows the one to sell to customers of the other, was the ideal next step in the consolidation of the industry, and the MMC, it is clear from the report, was not much against it. The Commission could see no way that an integrated company would be in a position to raise prices.

Mr Lang's decision seems to fly in the face of this. It also means that thousands of National Power shareholders will not be seeing their profits either once Southern of Atlanta plucks up courage and bids, because it will also have to be referred. Nor

will the City institutions, who have been betting heavily on such an offer.

The political advantage is that we will not see a complete dismemberment of the power industry, courtesy of the Americans, just before the election. They have the option of selling all of their holding in the regional company South Western as a condition of bidding again. But what odds that even then some reason for blocking a bid might be found?

When they flogged off the electricity industry it was expected to prove a dull backwater of the stock market, a collection of identical utilities. Instead it has given rise to any number of shocks, and the bidding frenzy is not necessarily over. Yesterday's falls may turn out to be overdone.

The Lang decision throws up a few anomalies. First, pity poor PowerGen, whose bid, on the above analysis, has fallen foul of the Americans' designs on National Power. Second, Scottish Power, a generator, was earlier allowed to buy a regional distributor, Manweb, although the

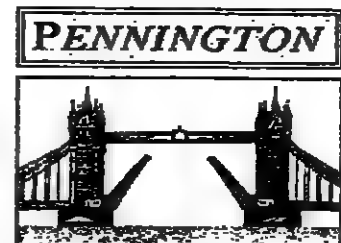
distinction could perhaps be made that they operate in different markets, Scotland having its own power industry.

Third, what of Eastern, allowed to build up 12 per cent of the generating market? This has come about at the instigation of the regulator, who forced the generators to sell the plant and apparently approved this vertical integration again yesterday. Those deals should surely now go to the MMC. But will a disgruntled National Power, whose sale clearly assumed a clearance, allow the deal to go ahead now, or hold off and damn the regulator to do his worst?

Open season on companies

□ THERE is a mood of paranoia about in the boardroom. It is the annual meeting season again, and those who remember the horrors inflicted by shareholders in the past are keen to limit the damage this year.

The whole of company law as it relates to annual meetings and shareholders' rights, like much



in this scripted tale, is in need of a good shake-up. Current law dates back to the days when most companies were family concerns, the meeting took place in the front parlour chaired by the family solicitor and all adjourned for a sherry afterwards.

Hence the archaic votes by show of hands, only superseded by a poll of proxy votes if things get too controversial. Hence, too, those curious hands in accounts that spell out directors' salaries anonymously, a relic from more gentlemanly days. Hence the placing of articles of association, details of directors' service contracts and other juicy morsels safely behind glass at head office, away from the rude public gaze.

These rules were not designed

for companies with shareholder bases running into several millions. Furthermore, this is the time of the active shareholder, and some boards are doing their best to limit their incursions.

British Aerospace has had to backtrack on scrapping the annual vote on its report and accounts, which along with the non-appointment of directors by rotation is the final nuclear trigger for disaffected investors. This was part of a raft of damage limitation measures aimed at protesters complaining about Hawk sales to Indonesia, but the company still wants to ditch votes on a show of hands.

The case for reform is compelling. Research due soon from Pensions and Investments Research Consultancy shows cases where genuine dissent, as registered by proxy votes, was stifled by a near-unanimous show of hands at the meeting. It also throws up the extraordinary fact that a fifth of all proxy votes are discretionary — in other words, handing over all power to the chairman rather than taking any firm line. How do you square active investment with

handing the company a large chunk of voting power to be used to shut out the views of those who actually bother to attend?

Sugar plays a blinder

□ ENGLAND manager Terry Venables may have been winning plaudits for his football tactics yesterday but it was his erstwhile business partner Alan Sugar who was showing that when it comes to football club finance he is the master tactician. Sugar has scored a double victory. He has pleased the fans by raising funds to rebuild the North London club's stadium without touching the club's precious transfer money pool. But he has also satisfied the City by improving the shares' poor liquidity and hinting that Tottenham is serious about dividends.

By reducing his stake to 40 per cent without selling, Mr Sugar has cleverly sidestepped any accusations of treachery that may have echoed from the terraces. He seems to have learnt a little about the psychology of

fans from the sudden and unhappy departure last summer of star player Jürgen Klinsmann. In future crises he can emphasise his long-term loyalty while pointing to the fact that he no longer has majority control.

But football is, who could resist the phrase, a game of two halves and Tottenham has a long way to go before it can be compared with Manchester United as an investment opportunity. Mr Sugar admitted as much yesterday when he said that the club still had a lot of work to do before it had fully utilised all its assets. A few trophies in the boardroom would also help, but until then the club, like the rest, remains dangerously sensitive to the weekly results on the field.

Payoff punchline

□ THE intra-tribal warfare at Littlewoods, between those who want the money and those who want the world to stop turning, has left three corpses. None of them family members, naturally; they include a former chief executive and, the latest, a departing chairman. We are not told whether he was on a revolving contract that would serve to boost his compensation payoff. But if James Ross, his successor, has any sense he will make very certain that he is.

Australian boost at Bank of Scotland

By PATRICIA TEHAN, BANKING CORRESPONDENT

BANK of Scotland yesterday proved that its decision to build up an Australian business instead of following the recent trend of banks to buy building societies had paid off when it announced a 21 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £545 million.

Sir Bruce Patullo, governor, said that although he would never rule out the possibility of buying a building society, the bank had decided that the acquisition of a 51 per cent stake in Bank of Western Australia was a better use of its capital.

He said that the prices being paid for societies were too high. "The building society movement has had its day."

The bank intends to split the role of chairman and chief executive, combined by Sir Bruce since 1991. Peter Burt, treasurer and chief general manager, will become chief executive in June. Sir Bruce will remain chairman.

Excluding non-recurring items, profits were £484.4 million, with growth at 16 per cent. Bad debt provisions fell from £221.5 million to £177.1

million. The main clearing bank operations contributed £333.7 million before tax, up 13 per cent. NWS Bank, the consumer credit business, increased profits 6 per cent to £121.7 million in spite of a 17 per cent increase in costs.

Profits at British Linen Bank, its merchant banking arm, more than doubled to £36 million. Kellock, the factoring operation, held profits at £4.2 million. The contribution from Countrywide Banking Corporation, its New Zealand bank, was £5.1 million higher at £26.7 million. The first-time contribution from Bank of Western Australia, for the three months to February 29, was £19.7 million.

About 14,000 staff will benefit from a £31.5 million profit-sharing pot. They will receive 15 per cent of their salaries, which assuming an average salary of £15,000 is an average of £2,250.

The dividend for the year has been increased to 6.85p, up 17.7 per cent, with the final payment of 4.4p payable on June 21.

Tempos, page 28

Forte close to bidding for hotels

By CLARE STEWART

PLANS for Sir Rocco Forte's return to the hotel industry are nearing completion with details of a major City funding package due within weeks.

Sir Rocco, who lost control of the Forte group in January after a bitterly fought £3.8 billion battle with Granada, is said to be near to securing up to £1 billion of City backing to help to finance a bid for former Forte hotels that Granada is looking to sell.

"Matters are at a sensitive stage," said a spokesman for Sir Rocco. It is thought that he and his team are talking to a number of City investment banks and venture capital groups, and that details of the funding will be finalised soon.

Sir Rocco announced his intention to return to hotels after Granada's victory, with his sights set on the Meridian and Exclusive hotels.

JJB Sports shoots ahead to defy City

By CLARE STEWART

JJB SPORTS, the sports retailer, notched up another top performance as pre-tax profits leapt 70 per cent to £12.9 million in the year to January 31, beating City expectations.

However, the prolonged winter is blamed for early season problems. David Whelan, JJB's chairman and a former Blackburn Rovers footballer, said: "Five weeks ago trading was 3 per cent down on a like-for-like basis."

Rapid expansion helped to lift turnover 48 per cent to £89.6 million, with like-for-like sales ahead 15 per cent. The Wigan-based group opened 25 stores, taking the chain to 148 outlets at the year end. A further 40 sites are planned this year.

JJB also announced a two-for-one bonus share issue. A final dividend of 6p gives a total of 8.75p.

Tottenham £11m cash call for rebuilding

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR, the football club, yesterday launched an £11 million rights issue to help to fund the rebuilding of its White Hart Lane stadium in north London (see Pennington, this page).

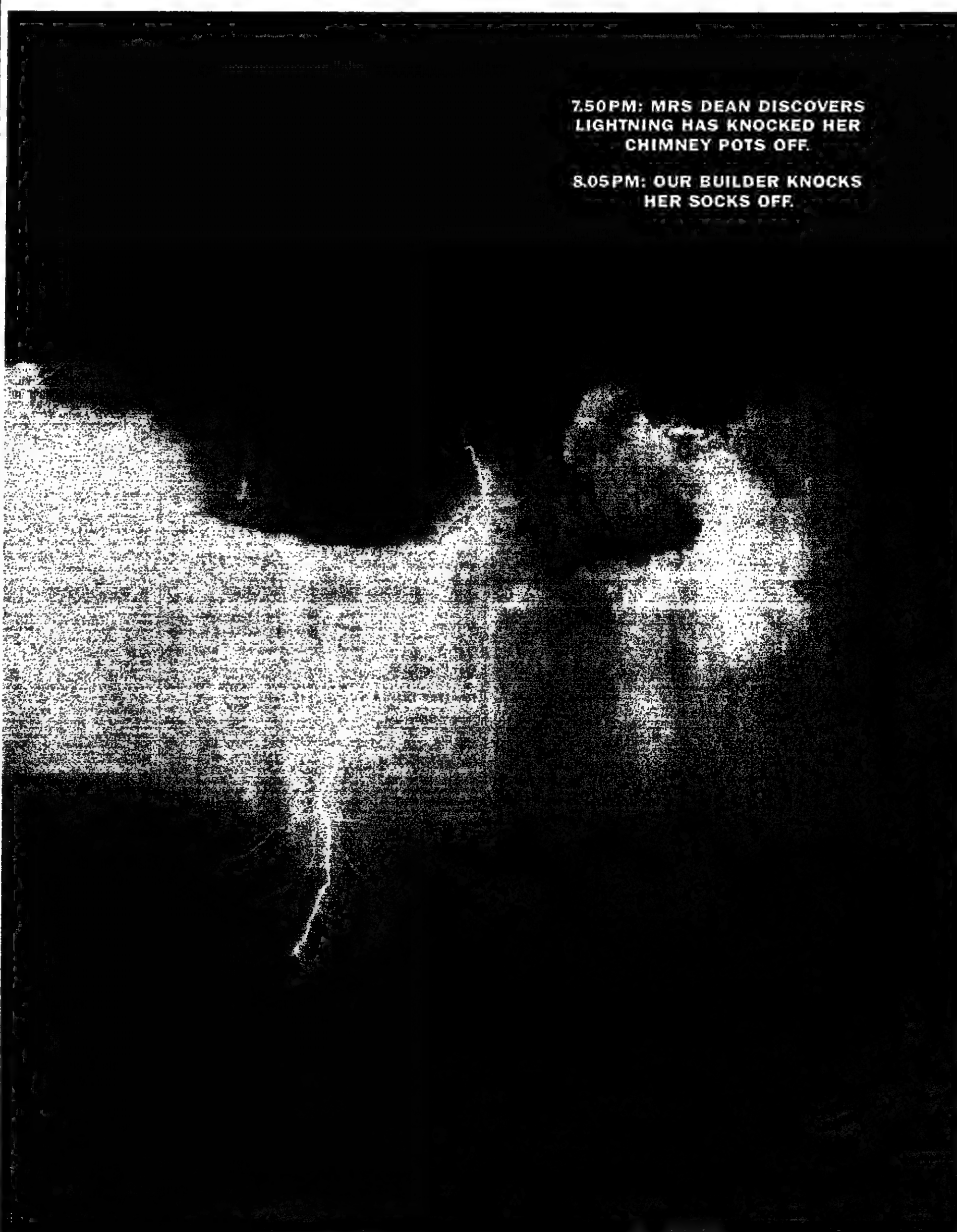
The move will also improve liquidity at the club, with Alan Sugar, chairman, waiving his right to take up the new shares, reducing his holding from 51 per cent to about 41 per cent.

The club said Mr Sugar's allocation would instead be placed with new institutional investors. A total of four million new shares will be offered

at 280p a share on a one-for-four basis. Dealings in the new shares will start today.

Mr Sugar insisted that he would not reduce his stake further. He said: "I could have sold shares and seen the money go into my own pocket, but we went for the rights issue so the money went into the club."

Tottenham said that trading had been good during the second half of the year and forecast a final dividend of 3p giving a total dividend of 4.5p, an increase of 50 per cent on last year.



7.50PM: MRS DEAN DISCOVERS LIGHTNING HAS KNICKED HER CHIMNEY POTS OFF.

8.05PM: OUR BUILDER KNOCKS HER SOCKS OFF.

Guardian
Guardian Royal Exchange Group

Speculators count cost of blocked power bids

THE smell of burnt fingers wafted around the market place as City speculators began counting the cost of the Government's decision to block the two power bids.

There was a knee-jerk reaction to the news that National Power's bid for Southern Electric and PowerGen's offer for Midlands Electricity were regarded by the Government as against the public interest. Prices managed to close above their worst of the day but losses were still recorded in National Power, down 32p to 50p on turnover of 22 million shares, PowerGen, 36p off to 57p, Southern Electric, 79p lower at 824p, and Midlands, 40p cheaper at 371p.

It had been assumed that the bids would be allowed to proceed, especially in the light of the proposed offer by Southern Electric, the US utility, for National Power which reacted by issuing terms for the similarly named Southern Electric.

Now the speculators have been left wondering if the US utility, which already owns South Western Electricity, will be allowed to press home its advantage.

But the four companies involved were not the only casualties of the Government's decision. Double-figure losses were also recorded in East Midlands, down 46p to 618p, London, 37p to 807p, Northern, 38p to 670p, and Yorkshire, 43p to 620p.

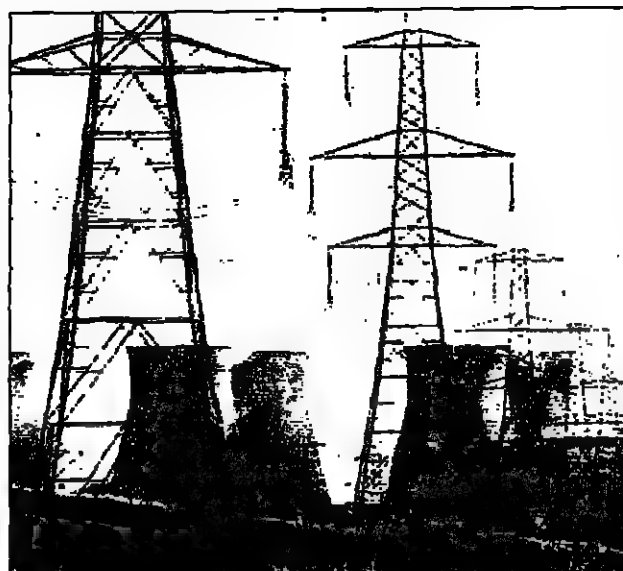
Among the other generators, Scottish Power dropped 19p to 373p, and Scottish Hydro fell 13p to 353p.

This dramatic turn of events also took its toll on the rest of the market which, up until the Government's announcement, had been trading in positive territory for much of the day. In the event, the FT-SE 100 index lost an 11-point lead to finish 15.4 down on the day at 3,817.6. The fall was compounded by a sharp opening fall by the Dow Jones industrial average on Wall Street.

The total shares changing hands reached 970 million enhanced by heavy turnover, yet again, in Ladbroke, up 9p to a new high of 205 1/4p at a total of 26.3 million shares were traded. Speculators say we should hear news of a bid approach soon. Possible suitors include Hilton Hotels of the US, Bass, light at 785p, and Scottish & Newcastle, unchanged at 683p.



MICHAEL CLARK



Generators and Rees suffered losses after the DIT decision

ICI was a firm market, climbing 24p to 954p ahead of first-quarter figures today expected to show a profits decline.

One of the best moves on the day was seen in The Telegraph, publisher of *The Daily Telegraph*, which soared 9p to 559p, almost matching terms of a minority bid by Hollinger, the company con-

tinued destocking meant that production rates in paper mills were still low.

The City gave a lukewarm reception to full-year figures from Bank of Scotland which at first revealed a creditable performance showing pre-tax profits soaring from £4.9 million to £54.5 million. But closer inspection revealed the figures had been bolstered by one-off profit contributions and a sharp drop in the provision for bad and doubtful debts. The shares responded with a fall of 7p to 251p.

Tottenham Hotspur jumped 14p to a new high of 324p after the north London football club announced plans to raise almost £11 million by way of a rights issue. The proceeds will be used to construct a new stand at its White Hart Lane stadium.

A bumper set of figures and encouraging remarks about current trading lifted Bantells, the department store retailer, 11p to 111p.

Modest demand in a thin market hoisted Domick Hunter, the engineer, 29p to a new high of 394p. Market-makers will normally only make a price in 5,000 shares at a time.

Shares in Active Imaging made a positive start to trading on the Alternative Investment Market after a placing of shares by Beeson Gregory, the broker, at 112p. The group started life at 128p and touched 138p before settling at 133p, a premium of 21p.

Elsewhere on the AIM, Dean Corporation held steady at 13p after a placing of 3.74 million new shares at 11p.

QILIT-EDGED: Traders had to contend with a volatile market as bids went in for the latest auction. The issue, £3 billion of Treasury 7 1/2 per cent 2006, was 2.65 times subscribed with investors paying a total of £7.95 billion. Once it became clear that the issue had been got away safely, prices in the rest of the market came off the boil.

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Q NEW YORK: Wall Street was troubled by program selling and an indifferent bond market. At midday, the Dow Jones industrial average was down 35.05 at 5,533.54.

ENGLISH CHINA CLAYS: MARGINS REMAIN UNDER PRESSURE

Asda, the supermarket chain, slipped 1 1/2p to 111 1/2p in heavy trading that saw more than 11 million shares change hands, after one leading broker slashed its forecast. NatWest Securities has turned cautious of Asda, cutting its pre-tax profit estimate for the current year to April 1997, by £12 million to £240 million.

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continued destocking meant that production rates in paper mills were still low.

The City gave a lukewarm reception to full-year figures from Bank of Scotland which at first revealed a creditable performance showing pre-tax profits soaring from £4.9 million to £54.5 million. But closer inspection revealed the figures had been bolstered by one-off profit contributions and a sharp drop in the provision for bad and doubtful debts. The shares responded with a fall of 7p to 251p.

Tottenham Hotspur jumped 14p to a new high of 324p after the north London football club announced plans to raise almost £11 million by way of a rights issue. The proceeds will be used to construct a new stand at its White Hart Lane stadium.

A bumper set of figures and encouraging remarks about current trading lifted Bantells, the department store retailer, 11p to 111p.

Modest demand in a thin market hoisted Domick Hunter, the engineer, 29p to a new high of 394p. Market-makers will normally only make a price in 5,000 shares at a time.

Shares in Active Imaging made a positive start to trading on the Alternative Investment Market after a placing of shares by Beeson Gregory, the broker, at 112p. The group started life at 128p and touched 138p before settling at 133p, a premium of 21p.

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MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday):
Dow Jones 5533.54 (-35.05)
S&P Composite 660.02 (-1.59)

Tokyo:
Nikkei Average 2226.05 (+162.17)
DAX 2538.26 (+119.92)

Hong Kong:
Hang Seng 1098.69 (+9.64)

Amsterdam:
EEX Index 553.88 (+1.63)
Sydney 2322.10 (+22.10)

Frankfurt:
DAX 2538.26 (+119.92)

Singapore:
Straits 2361.18 (+2.45)

Brussels:
General 9095.97 (+39.46)

Paris:
CAC-40 2122.10 (+10.12)

Zurich:
SIX Gen 793.60 (+2.80)

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TEMPUS

A victim of the market

BET is living up to its reputation as a late developer. In the final week of the bid, it woke up and rallied a few institutions to its cause, persuading one to endorse publicly the management. The company asked institutions to ignore years of underperformance and focus on the last two when it has clearly delivered some good growth. Yesterday it mischievously published some research which suggested that bidders that issue paper tend to underperform after the takeover, and that Rentokil might do likewise.

The research is not new and shareholders in BET would be wise to note that investors in targets do tend to do better than investors in bidding companies. The costs of the bid alone could top £100 million, enough to wipe out BET's profits last year and for shareholders, the logical conclusion is to take the cash

available — Rentokil could be buying again today — and avoid the overhead shares. Known supporters of BET currently total 17.5 per cent of the share capital and they are interesting for being of a similar ilk — fund managers that seek undervalued stocks and who tend to support managements long term. Many of the funds that sold out to Rentokil this week were also turning up their nose at Rentokil shares — too highly rated, they sniffed.

If BET loses on Friday, it will be in good part a casualty of a market that has lost interest in recovery stocks. The recent performance of fund managers like M&G is evidence alone but investors should be suspicious of a share market that is chasing bid rumours and pushing up the price of highly rated "growth stocks". A correction looks overdue.

Bank of Scotland

A STOCK market obsessed with cash windfalls, bids and other short-term gains had no time to listen to Bank of Scotland yesterday and gave the thumbs down to its cost increase. Granted, the bank's figures were confusing given the profusion of non-recurring items and a first-time contribution from Bank of Western Australia. Investment in staff and systems sent the bank's cost-income ratio from 49.3 to 52.1 per cent. Excluding exceptional revenue gains, the figure worsens to 53.4 per cent.

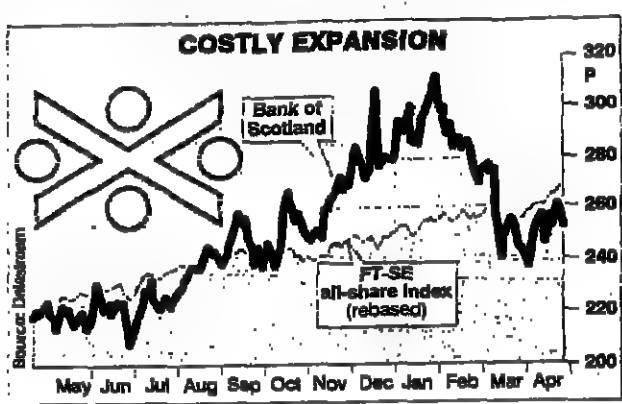
Expenditure will remain high this year, keeping the cost-income ratio static, but the bank's management says the ratio is miles below those of its competitors. NatWest, for example, is 67.9 per cent, and the best it can hope for is a reduction to 58

per cent in the UK by the year 2000. Meanwhile, Bank of Scotland should get back to normal levels next year.

The bank's Australian acquisition was well received. In hindsight, BoS was wise to put its money overseas rather than in a medium-sized building society operating in a stagnant market.

The bank's shares are trad-

ing on a prospective price-earnings ratio of 9.65, lower than the sector average of 10.3 times. Critics of Bank of Scotland knock its conservatism, but when the bank invests, then criticise it for increasing costs. That is a pity — its investment in NWS is clearly paying off with increased profits. Investors need a little patience.



Platinum

IF YOU felt secure in your knowledge of Europe's borders, think again, because the European Commission believes they extend as far as Johannesburg. The Competition Commissioner has decided to block the platinum merger between Lonrho and Gencor, arguing that it would create a dominant duopoly between Impala, the merged venture, with 28 per cent of the market, and Anglo American, which accounts for 35 per cent of the world's platinum.

American regulators will be amused to watch the Commission's extrajurisdiction — Europe has often objected to the long reach of the US Federal Trade Commission. More questionable is the likely effect of the ruling. The commissioner clearly fears that the platinum price is being fixed over lunch in Johannesburg. Were that the case, blocking the Lonrho/Gencor

deal will solve little. Before the merger the two companies were already holding hands, with Impala owning 27 per cent of Lonrho's platinum operation while Gencor had 40.5 per cent of Impala.

Europe is a large consumer of platinum, but its consumption of 0.8 million ounces pales beside Japan, which absorbs 2.2 million ounces, mainly in jewellery, out of the 4.7 million produced worldwide annually. But the main influence on the price is Russia, which has about a quarter of the market and is selling off its stockpiles of the metal in search of hard currency.

The Commission's desire to kill off another cosy South African cartel may be welcomed, even in that country, but it has probably achieved only a propaganda victory. Even now, Anglo American is amassing shares in Lonrho and the prospect of a merger of the platinum interests

THE
TIMES
CITY
DIARY

Massaging their egos

LIFE is fun at the Institute of Directors. Not only has an in-house wine bar opened at the IoD's Pall Mall headquarters, but businessmen attending yesterday's IoD conference at the Royal Albert Hall were treated to on-site massage courtesy of Champneys. Meanwhile, the innovation of electronic voting leaves room for confusion. Asked to register their gender, 83.7 per cent of delegates declared themselves men, and 14.9 per cent said they were women. Decisively, 1.4 per cent did not know.

Hot water

EVEN the IoD's celebrated lunchbox didn't escape the heated European debate. In place of beef, conventioners were treated to cold lamb chops, washed down with Californian Sauvignon Blanc. The French butter passed without comment, but arch-Euro-sceptic Lord Tebbit, who proposed the motion against a single currency, seized on the Perrier bottles to highlight the openness of Britain's economy. "Can you imagine the French employers' organisation offering Malvern water at their annual conference?" he asked.



Tebbit: Perrier point

AFTER watching hostile bidder Rentokil make blunder after blunder in the course of its bid, BET managed one of its own yesterday. In a jumbled metaphor, John Clark, chairman of BET, sniped: "Rentokil's future balance sheet weakness surely means the kettle is trying to call the pot black."

Power failure

WE think we've cracked why Ian Lang, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and President of the Board of Trade, made the completely unexpected decision to block the power bids yesterday. In early copies of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission's reports, pages 27 to 28 were not only bound upside down, but were also in the wrong order.

WAGE inflation has hit the Treasury. Unable to fill the chief executive's vacancy at the National Savings department, more than six months after the departure of David Butler, a new advertisement for the slot this week raises the salary from £80,000 to £100,000 or more "for an exceptional candidate".

Dry sugar

IT WAS a gentle amble for Alan Sugar yesterday, from his luxury yacht moored alongside Tower Bridge to his broker's office for the announcement of Tottenham Hotspur's share issue. The yacht boasts a cinema and hot air balloon. When asked if he had been for an early morning swim, Sugar sniffed: "Certainly not. I have other people to do that for me."

WILL Jack Straw jump to the defence of his baby brother, after Gordon Brown accused accountancy firms yesterday of dealing in "rumours and lies"? Edward the shadow Home Secretary's 47-year-old brother, has been a partner at Coopers & Lybrand since 1982.

MORAG PRESTON

Weakening of the mark in relation to flimsy franc buoys case for union

In the month I spent immersed in the parochial concerns of British electoral politics and the Labour Party, momentous events have happened in the economic world, particularly in Europe. The financial markets' flirtation with European Monetary Union — whose mounting ardour I disapprovingly described in several Economic Views between Christmas and Easter — seems to have blossomed into a full-scale love affair.

The financial markets are now taking the formation of a monetary union involving Germany, France, Austria and the Benelux countries completely for granted. They are also assuming that the single currency will be created on time in January 1999.

This is evidenced by the dramatic strengthening of the French franc and the near disappearance of the usual spread between German and French bond yields. The French still do pay a tiny premium of 0.06 percentage points on their ten-year bonds, but this is fully explained by the small difference between short-term interest rates in the two countries, which investors expect to persist until EMU is consummated in 1999.

After that date there is absolutely no difference between expected interest rates in the two countries.

In effect, the world's money managers are now saying that they are completely indifferent as between holding francs or holding marks. To be more precise they are not saying this, since most remain Eurosceptical and awed by the reputation of the Bundesbank. Instead they are doing something far more important. They are betting their money on a concept that their minds cannot yet quite accept — that the mighty mark will, in future, be no stronger than the flimsy franc.

In fact, according to the rates on forward bond-swaps provided by Alison Cottrell of PaineWebber International, the market is expecting French interest rates to be marginally lower than German ones by 1999. In bizarre, but highly significant, reversal of the usual relationship first reported in this column three months ago.

One reason why the markets have embraced so totally the concept of a single currency is that political momentum for EMU is building all the time. The political event was the Baden-Württemberg election on March 24.

I said back in March that this one vote could do more to settle the future of Europe than any number of economic debates or White Papers. And in the event it did. The social democrats who tried to run an honest campaign against

From Mr Michael J. Flint Sir, The Treasury's cost-cutting culture may not necessarily account for the shortfall in value-added tax receipts, as implied by Robert Bruce (Audit, April 18). Having lost the battle of Jaffa Cake, HM Customs and Excise have used their ample resources to target some other marginal areas of VAT, such as orange juice (freshly pressed juice no longer excused), hot-air balloon rides, and alterations to residential listed buildings which are deemed to be under maintenance and repair (which has become quite a tricky subject); church bells are another trouble spot.

Somewhat curious therefore, and possibly related to the shortfall, was the generous and unexpected introduction of a relief for conversions of non-residential buildings into dwellings provided that the developer granted a long lease of the converted building or sold it outright.

The forecast of VAT foregone, made when the zero-rating was introduced in July

monetary union did so for the first (and probably last) time in German history. The people showed no interest whatsoever in the subject and voted in droves against the SPD. Helmut Kohl's coalition emerged triumphant and his faith in "the European construction" was reaffirmed.

More recently there has been a better publicised boost for EMU from last weekend's Italian election. The victory for Romano Prodi's "Olive Tree" coalition is important not so much because the Italian Left are more pro-European than the Right. The idea that an Italy led by Silvio Berlusconi might one day become an ally for Britain against the Franco-German juggernaut was never more than a fantasy of the Tory Right.

Antonio Martino, the supposedly Europhobic former foreign minister in the Berlusconi Government, once remarked to me: "I am a Eurosceptic by Italian standards, which means that on the British spectrum I would be considered a moderate pro-European."

The real significance of the left-wing victory on Sunday is that Italy may now enjoy a period of stable and perhaps even responsible government. Even if this happens, Italy will not become a founder-member of EMU, but the chances of Italian political and financial instability undermining the entire project will be much reduced.

The reasons why Italy will certainly not join EMU in 1999 are worth considering further. For they tell us as much about the single currency, its method of implementation — and its implications for Britain — as they do about Italy.

Italy will not, of course, meet the Maastricht convergence criteria in April 1998, when the

decisions are due to be made. But then, neither will Belgium, The Netherlands or France. Indeed it is quite possible that Germany will fall foul of both the key targets: a government deficit below 3 per cent of GDP and gross public debt of less than 60 per cent of GDP.

The International Monetary Fund forecast last week that, on present policies, Germany would have a deficit of 3.4 per cent and a public debt of 61.1 per cent in 1997, while France's deficit would be 3.6 per cent. And if those overshoots look moderate consider the debt forecasts for Belgium and The Netherlands: 131 per cent and 78 per cent.

Why are the markets so sure that a single currency will happen, even though the

Financial markets are taking for granted the formation of a [restricted] EMU

Maastricht targets are clearly out of reach? And why are they equally confident that a bankrupt country like Belgium will become a founder-member, while Italy (and Britain) will not?

The main answer lies, as ever, in German politics. The defeat of the anti-EMU campaign in Baden-Württemberg did not merely show that the Germans were relatively immune to populist campaigns about preserving "our mark". It also suggested something more subtle — German public opinion no longer sees EMU as a black and white issue.

First, the Germans have seen the dark side of that old Bundesbank slogan "a strong

mark is a good mark". The Germans now want the mark to weaken, not only against the dollar and the yen, but also against the lira, the pound and the Swedish crown. That removes one of the main sources of friction between Germany and France, since France has always wanted the weakest currency it could have without alienating the Germans.

The second subtle point the German public has increasingly grasped is the distinction between a monetary union embracing the whole of Europe and a German-dominated hard core. Polls have shown that a monetary union involving only Germany, France, Austria and the Benelux countries enjoys 70 per cent public support. But if Italy or Spain is included in such an arrangement support immediately drops to 40 per cent or less.

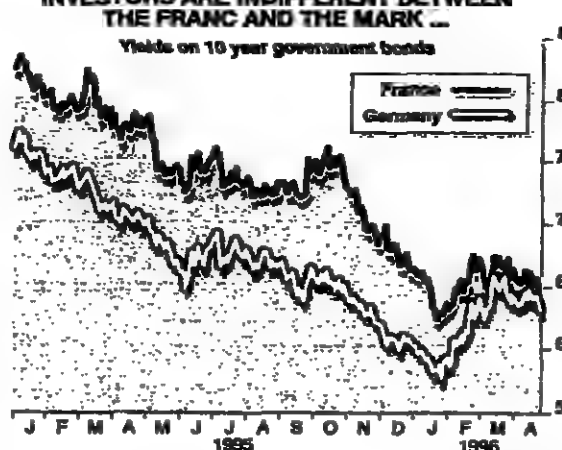
One reason the Germans are becoming more relaxed about EMU is that their politicians, bankers and businessmen are quietly reassuring them that improvident Mediterranean countries will not be allowed to join.

The Maastricht criteria leave plenty of scope to achieve this result. But the problem is that a single currency without the "Club Med" would be almost pointless. One of the main functions of EMU from the German and French standpoint is to stop their neighbours improving their competitiveness by devaluing.

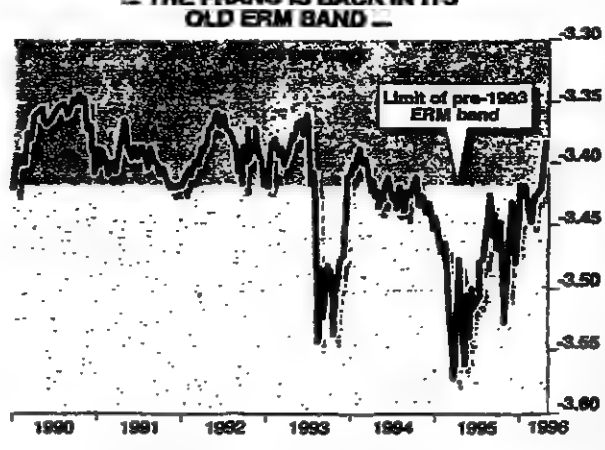
This is the problem addressed by the new-style ERM demanded by France (with the usual German support). If Italy and other peripheral countries can be forced to tie their currencies to the euro and to cede control of domestic policies to the European Central Bank, then the threat of "competitive devaluations"

THE MARKETS NOW TAKE MONETARY UNION FOR GRANTED

INVESTORS ARE INDIFFERENT BETWEEN THE FRANC AND THE MARK ...

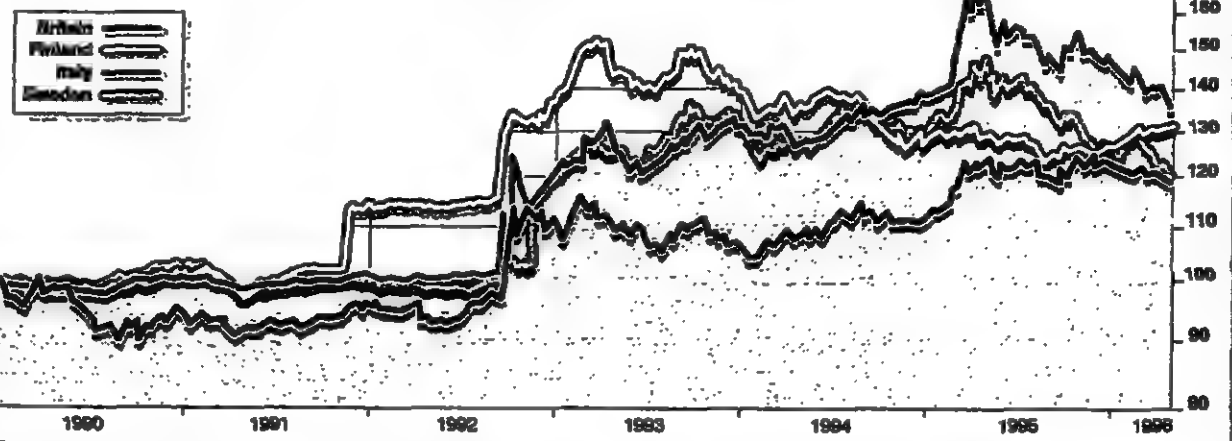


... THE FRANC IS BACK IN ITS OLD ERM BAND ...



AND PERIPHERAL CURRENCIES ARE PREPARING TO REJOIN THE ERM

(Exchange rates against the mark 1:100 = 100)



Telecom giants face hitch at the altar

Eric Reguly on the German dilemma facing BT and Cable and Wireless

When Veba, Germany's fourth-largest company, learnt that Cable and Wireless and BT were in merger discussions, it sensed a once-in-a-lifetime chance to influence, and ultimately benefit from, the formation of a £35 billion global telecoms group. Veba owns 10.5 per cent of C&W, and the companies have formed two joint ventures — Vebacom and Cable and Wireless Europe — to tackle the deregulating phone market in Germany and elsewhere on the continent.

But Veba faced one potentially insurmountable obstacle. BT also had a German partner in the form of Viag, another corporate giant with grand designs on the German telecoms market. Last year, BT and Viag formed a joint venture called Viag Interkom, pledged to invest £600 million in it over five years and recruited RWE, one of Germany's largest utilities, as a partner.

Since C&W and BT had competing telecoms companies in Germany, it became clear that one of them would have to go if C&W and BT merged. Deciding which of the joint ventures is to be sacrificed

cent stake in C&W and a seat on its board, Veba is in a more powerful negotiating position than Viag. Veba probably lacks the clout to stop the merger, but could certainly hinder it.

Veba appears to have the upper hand. Observers say that BT would be foolish to alienate a major C&W shareholder and is beginning to see the business logic of keeping the C&W European alliances in the group's portfolio. They note that Viag Interkom, its partnership with Viag, is somewhat less developed than C&W's and may have a better chance at putting a dent in Deutsche Telekom's market after deregulation in 1998.

Vebacom, the larger of C&W's two joint ventures with Veba, had sales of DM339 million last year and hopes to achieve sales of more than DM8 billion by 2003, becoming the single biggest competitor to Deutsche Telekom. Veba has invested about DM1.2 billion in Vebacom and a further DM2.2 billion for 10.5 per cent of C&W. Vebacom's

portfolio of services and investments is broader than Viag Interkom's. It has a public telephony business, a corporate network

service, three cable investments with 1.2 million customers and a clutch of mobile phone interests, including a 28 per cent stake in E-Plus, one of Germany's fastest-growing players in the sector.

Viag Interkom has no mobile phone investments. But it does distribute international business telephony products, called Concert, developed by BT and MCI, America's second-largest long-distance phone company. Viag and RWE can also provide Viag Interkom with a nationwide network of high-capacity fibre-optic cables.

Although Veba has more influence than Viag over the outcome of the merger talks, Viag shows no signs of abandoning the fight. It argues that its relationship with BT has, if anything, become closer since the merger talks began last year and that its partnership agreement with BT is legally binding. If Viag Interkom is ditched, Viag may be able to extract a hefty payment from BT as a consolation prize.

For several months now, Veba and Viag have been putting their cases to the top executives at C&W and BT. Viag even went public with its plea. In a statement, it said: "Viag and BT wish to state that the [C&W-BT merger] discussions will not disturb the existing collaboration. The broadening of the Viag-BT alliance with RWE has precedence over any other solution."

Veba, however, has been equally adamant that its interests should not be sacrificed and, in effect, issued a threat. It made it clear that it would not support the C&W-BT merger if its demands were not met. With a 10.5 per

cent stake in C&W and a seat on its board, Veba is in a more powerful negotiating position than Viag. Veba probably lacks the clout to stop the merger, but could certainly hinder it.

SCOTTISH WIDOWS' FUND AND LIFE ASSURANCE SOCIETY

Notice is hereby given that the 182nd Annual General Meeting of the Members of the Society will be held at the Head Office, 15 Dalkeith Road, Edinburgh on Tuesday 7 May 1996 at 2.30pm for the following purposes:

- To consider the Accounts and Balance Sheets for the year ended 31 December 1995 and the Reports of the Directors and Auditors.
- To re-elect Mr R H Davey, Mr W H Main, Dr C Masters and Mr D C Ritchie as Directors.
- To fix the remuneration of Directors.
- To re-appoint Price Waterhouse as Auditors.
- To authorise the Directors to fix the remuneration of the Auditors for the current year.
- To transact any other ordinary business proper to an Annual General Meeting.

Forms of Proxy for the use of Members of the Society who are unable to be present at the Meeting, but who may wish to vote, may be obtained on application to the undersigned. To be effective, Proxies must reach the Society's Head Office not less than two clear working days before the time for holding the Meeting. A proxy need not be a Member of the Society.

Questions may be submitted from Members who themselves or through their Proxy intend to be present at the Meeting. These should be in writing and lodged with the undersigned not less than four clear working days before the Meeting.

T B Houston SSC
Group Legal Adviser and Secretary
15 Dalkeith Road, Edinburgh EH16 5BU

3 April 1996

Lagging behind in the UK?

From Mr Ian Roderick Sir, In *The Times* (April 22) you carried a four-page spread on the Queen's Awards that also contained 22 advertisements from some of the companies that have won awards. Only one of these advertisements had an Internet site (URL), another one had an e-mail address, but mostly they displayed their phone numbers.

Is this a symptom that we here in the UK are lagging far behind the redefinition of the organisation as a set of legal and moral responsibilities attached to a World Wide Web site, or does it mean that successful companies are wisely ignoring media-induced hypebole?

I would have been happier if a few more were at least trying out this method of disseminating information about themselves just in case.

Yours sincerely,
IAN RODERICK,
Dovetail Information Systems,
Sidelands House,
Chew Magna, Bristol.

Look at conversions to find missing VAT millions

From Mr Michael J. Flint Sir, The Treasury's cost-cutting culture may not necessarily account for the shortfall in value-added tax receipts, as implied by Robert Bruce (Audit, April 18). Having lost the battle of Jaffa Cake, HM Customs and Excise have used their ample resources to target some other marginal areas of VAT, such as orange juice (freshly pressed juice no longer excused), hot-air balloon rides, and alterations to residential listed buildings which are deemed to be under maintenance and repair (which has become quite a tricky subject); church bells are another trouble spot.

Somewhat curious therefore, and possibly related to the shortfall, was the generous and unexpected introduction of a relief for conversions of non-residential buildings into dwellings provided that the developer granted a long lease of the converted building or sold it outright.

The forecast of VAT foregone, made when the zero-rating was introduced in July

1994 as a concession, was only £20 million. A legal order in March 1995 confirmed the terms of the relief.

Given the number of conversion projects which have been featured in property and homes pages in the *Times*, ranging from small schemes to the large and prestigious, it is worth considering whether the forecast should be multiplied many times over to be more realistic.

As an example, I have taken the figures related to the conversion of Lavender Hill School into flats (Property feature, April 13) and estimate a total VAT refund entitlement of something between £500,000 and £700,000 on just this one medium-size scheme. Most of this will rightfully be picked up by the development company as input tax, but the eventual purchasers of the 30 bare "shell" units to be sold by the developer could be individually able to make VAT claims totalling £200,000, an estimate based on the likely cost of completing the conver-

sion of each unit given to be between £20,000 and £30,000.

The new relief was intended to be easy to obtain and fairly simple tax planning measures can be taken by developers to fully recover VAT on the cost of converting all sorts of buildings, from old barns, churches and water towers to the largest commercial or office building, provided that the end-use is residential and that the flats or whatever are sold off. Anyone converting their own barn or anything else into a dwelling on a DIY basis can also have the VAT back, so long as they are not doing it as a business.

That's where I would look for some disappearing VAT. But as a former "gamekeeper" (a VAT inspector, whose local office closed down) about to start poaching, I would know where to look, wouldn't I?

Yours faithfully,
M. J. FLINT
(Value-added tax specialist),
16 Painsbridge Way,
Horam,
Heathfield,
East Sussex.

Bankers for Energy flotation

The July privatisation of British Energy, the nuclear power group, is to be handled by Cazenove & Co, HSBC Investment Bank, Mediobanca-Banca di Credito Finanziario, Morgan Stanley, Nikko Europe, Paribas Capital Markets, and West Merchant Bank.

They will work with Barclays de Zoete Wedd, global co-ordinator for the offer, which is expected to put a price of about £2.5 billion on the company.

S&U ahead

S&U, the financial services business, lifted pre-tax profits by 16 per cent, to £7 million, in the year to January 31, its tenth successive year of profit growth. Sales rose to £64.72 million, from £61.79 million. A 12.5p final dividend, up 31.58 per cent, makes 10p, up 28 per cent.

Pub change

Paramount, the pub company, has lost the contract to manage Writtle Taverns after the sale of the 39-pub chain by Whitbread. Paramount said that loss of the contract, worth about £125,000 last year, would have little impact on its results for the year to May 31.

Offer for Elys

Panther Securities, the quoted property company, has raised the lower tier of its cash offer for Elys (Wimbledon), the store group, by 40p a share, making the new offer worth 525p. The weighted average price for full acceptance is now 600p.

Oxford deal

Oxford Instruments, maker of scientific equipment, has bought WA Technology, of Cambridge, from its five shareholders for an undisclosed sum, after three years' collaboration.

Venture total

The first 12 venture capital trusts, replacement for business expansion schemes, have raised more than £150 million since their September launch, the Treasury said yesterday.



Grenville Peacock, right, Bentalls' chief executive, with John Ryan, the group's finance and property director

Bentalls to sell stake as profits halve

PROFITS before tax at Bentalls, the department store group, plunged 52 per cent to £1.2 million (£2.5 million) because of squeezed margins (Fraser Nelson writes).

While its turnover rose 2 per cent to £86 million, this was offset by £5 million debt repayment. £150,000 spent closing its store in Tunbridge Wells, £614,000 on refurbishing its remaining five stores and management consultancy fees. Interest repayments came to £1.7 million.

The company borrowed £25 million in 1995 to help to redevelop the Bentalls Centre in Kingston upon Thames, but is now selling its 17 per cent rental interest to settle the debt. This will be done under an option arranged with Norwich Union, expected to bring in £36.5 million.

There is a final dividend of 2.25p (12.5p). Earnings were down 82 per cent to 1.74p.

Helical Bar edges upwards to £9.2m

HELICAL BAR, the property developer, doubled profits from completed developments sales last year but investment property values fell and it said 1995 had been disappointing with little growth in rental levels and falling investment values.

At the end of January, Helical's net asset value per share had risen only 4p to 308p per share after a revaluation of the investment portfolio showed a deficit of £2.8 million. Pre-tax profit for the year to January 31 rose £1 million to £9.2 million, including trading and development profits of £6.6 million (£3.2 million). The final dividend of 4.4p (3.75p) makes 7.5p for the year, up 12.3 per cent on last time.

Aberforth plans placing

ABERFORTH Smaller Companies Trust, which aims to invest in a portfolio of small UK-listed companies, yesterday announced it intends to raise £74.4 million net of expenses through a proposed placing and offer for up to 75 million "C" shares at 100p per share. The placing will be around 65 million shares, with the offer making up the remainder. The offer will be open to existing investors and the public. One new warrant will be issued for every five new ordinary shares.

Trust may lift payout

INVESTORS CAPITAL TRUST hinted that dividends may be increased later this year and in 1997 when it reported results for the six months to March 31. The sister company to Ivory & Sime's flagship British Assets investment trust said the upside for the UK equity market looked "limited through the summer months". The fund aims to beat the return of the FT-SE 350 index, but its return was 7 per cent, compared with the index's 8 per cent. There is an interim dividend of 1.35p per share.

Costs hit Essex Furniture

ESSEX FURNITURE reported a sharp drop in pre-tax profits after the opening costs of ten new stores left interest payments of £61,000. Results for the 18 months to December 13, 1995 show a pre-tax profit of £1.18 million, against profits of £1.406 million in the 12 months to June 30, 1994 — month-for-month a fall of 44 per cent. However, turnover jumped to £44.3 million in the 18 months, against £17.7 million in the 12-month period. There is a final dividend of 2.10p (18-month total of 6.40p).

Epic heads for AIM

EPIC MULTIMEDIA, a specialist in developing multimedia for both the consumer and business markets, is set to join the Alternative Investment Market via a placing, with the float expected to capitalise the group at about £20 million. Epic, based in Brighton, West Sussex, was formed as a buyout in 1989, and produces interactive entertainment titles. In the nine months to February 28, Epic made losses of £1.39 million, on turnover of £2.97 million.

Marshalls to sell

MARSHALLS, the building materials and tools group, is selling its non-core engineering operations to Halco Group for £16 million. The company will use the proceeds to continue with in-fill acquisitions in the building materials industry and to finance organic growth. Marshalls said the sale will result in an exceptional profit of £2.75 million after allowing for goodwill previously written off and the costs of the transaction.

EU blocks Lonrho-Gencor link over platinum price-fixing fear

By Jon Ashworth

THE European Commission has blocked Lonrho and Gencor from creating a new platinum giant because of fears that the company and its only rival, Anglo American, would use their stranglehold to fix prices.

Karel Van Miert, European Competition Commissioner, said the proposed link-up would have created a duopoly dominating the world markets

for platinum and rhodium. He also gave a warning that any takeover bid for Lonrho by Anglo American would be opposed on similar grounds by his powerful anti-trust directorship.

Although the newly merged entity would have been based in South Africa, it came under the Commission's jurisdiction because the two parent companies have a combined turnover of more than \$6.5 billion a year and more than \$325

million each within the European Union.

Dieter Bock, chief executive of Lonrho, expressed surprise at the decision, but said Lonrho's platinum operations were unaffected. He was puzzled that the Commission had chosen to prevent a transaction to which European consumers had very little exposure and over which few, if any, had reservations.

Gencor, South Africa's second biggest mining house,

said that it would appeal. Michael McMahon, chairman of Impala Platinum, Gencor's platinum arm, said: "The Commission has ignored evidence that this merger is based on the soundest pro-competitive rationale."

Anglo American recently took an option over 18.4 per cent of Lonrho shares, effectively lifting its stake in the hotels-to-mining conglomerate to 28.5 per cent. The company is expected to inherit

a similar stake in Lonrho's mining portfolio when Lonrho separates its mining and non-mining interests. Anglo American has said that it is not interested in bidding for Lonrho, but wanted access to a pan-African mining portfolio.

Mr Van Miert said the possibility of Anglo American exercising control of Lonrho had been a factor, and rejected arguments that it would create a powerful pole of competition for Anglo American. "There was a risk that Anglo American could have gained complete control of platinum production in South Africa, which represents 90 per cent of the world's platinum potential."

Lonrho and Gencor agreed in November to merge platinum operations. Impala Platinum Holdings, valued at \$2 billion, would have had 28 per cent of the world market, against 35 per cent held by Anglo American Platinum Corporation (Amplats).

Tempus, page 28

Eggar confident as fuel output rises

OIL and gas production hit record levels last year, while Tim Eggar, Energy Minister, forecast that underground reserves could stretch into the middle of the next century (Christine Buckley writes).

According to Department of Trade and Industry statistics for output around Britain, oil production rose to 130 million tonnes from 127 mil-

lion tonnes in 1994, while gas production increased to 75 billion cubic metres from 70 billion cubic metres.

Income from oil and gas production last year was £18 billion with gas contributing £4 billion. Investment in the industry rose 19 per cent to £4.2 billion, which is nearly a fifth of all investment made in Britain's industry. The contri-

bution from oil to the balance of payments was estimated at £4 billion. Oil and gas accounted for about 2 per cent of gross domestic product.

Mr Eggar was upbeat about the prospects for both fuels and wrote off speculation that the UK will soon be an importer of gas. He said that forecasts pitching gas importation by 2005 were

pessimistic and that with 20 years' worth of discovered fields he would be surprised if imports began so quickly.

Mr Eggar, who did not rule out a return to the oil industry after he leaves Parliament at the next election, said the production figures confounded those who had said that a decline was inevitable through the 1990s.

ACCOUNTANCY

An ethical badge of pride

Jack Maurice says an international vote could bind UK accountants — but there will be no complaints

At the end of March, representatives of more than 20 countries debated in Paris measures which are likely to result in enhanced ethical guidance for all qualified accountants working in industry, commerce, the public sector or education.

All the national accountancy bodies represented are members of the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC), membership of which carries an obligation to do everything possible to implement IFAC standards and guidelines within one's own country. The three proposals approved by the forum for submission to the IFAC Council in May would involve changes to the IFAC Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants in three areas:

- second and other opinions;
- professional fees;
- applicability of the code to employed accountants.

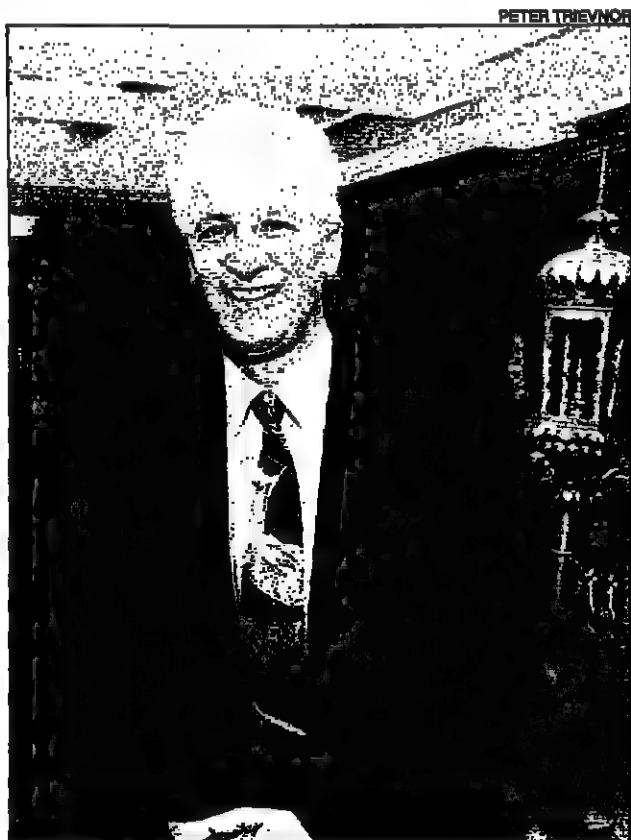
The first two submissions are intended to deal with two problems currently facing the practising profession — "opinion shopping" and "low-balling" respectively. These terms are largely self-explanatory. The additional guidance proposed is similar to that already in place for members of the UK auditing bodies.

But the third proposal would add four new sections to the code of application specifically to professional account-

ants employed in industry and commerce. At the moment, there is no element of the code specifically applicable to non-practising accountants. However, all professional accountants are expected to accord with part A of the code, which includes the fundamental principles: integrity, objectivity, competence, observance of professional standards and confidentiality.

The new sections deal with conflict of loyalties, support for professional colleagues, and professional competence insofar as they affect employed accountants, and presentation of information. The additional guidance, which has been under discussion by IFAC's financial management and accounting committee for more than two years, is intended to acknowledge the role of employed members and to assist them to carry out their duties to their employers in a manner consistent with professional integrity and competence, rather than to impose unrealistic burdens. Further, the code is directed at the national bodies themselves rather than at individual members. However, this particular submission should be of interest to well over 100,000 accountants in the UK.

These accountants are members of one or other of the six professional accountancy bodies which together form the



Jack Maurice says UK accountants are not shy about ethics

Consultative Committee of Accountancy Bodies (CCAB): the three Institutes of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, Ireland and Scotland (ICAEW, ICAI and ICAS), the Chartered Association of Certified Accountants, the Chartered Institute of Public and Financial Accountants and the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants. CCAB represents the UK professional as a member of IFAC. This means that if the additional

guidance is approved by the IFAC Council next month, all six bodies will be bound to do their best to bring in equivalent guidance for their own members. Each of the bodies has, in fact, a majority of members working outside practice, who will be subject to any new ethical provisions which result.

Membership of each of the six bodies is hard-won, and prized in the marketplace. The financial directors, controllers

and managers who will be subject to the new provisions will, no doubt, bear any added responsibilities attaching to their membership with pride. Some of the elements in the "forum" guidance are already in the current guides of one or another of the bodies, but some have no exact parallel.

Professional accountants employed in practice are subject to all the provisions of part B of the code — like their principals. However, the preamble to the new section C is likely to state that in certain circumstances these new provisions may apply to employees in practice as well as to those in industry. They will therefore be in a unique category: professional accountants to whom both the guidance for those in practice and that for employed accountants will apply. The guidance of the UK bodies, like that of most national bodies, has largely neglected this category, and it will be interesting to see how many ethical inquiries to the accountancy bodies result from the new provisions.

UK accountants are not shy about making such inquiries: the Professional Ethics Department of ICAEW, for example, already handles more than 11,000 ethical inquiries a year — more than any other accountancy body in the world.

The author is head of professional ethics at ICAEW, and UK Ethics Adviser to IFAC. His book, *Accounting Ethics*, was published by Pitman Publishing last month (ISBN 0273622242).

Days of the mid-size firm are numbered

FOR accounting firms other than those in the Big Six, the game is up. Last week's figures produced by *Accountancy Age* magazine show that of the Top 100 UK companies only one complete audit is still in the hands of what would be characterised as a medium-sized firm. All the rest are carried out by the elite group of the largest firms.

And if you stretch the survey to include the audits of the UK's Top 500 companies the figures are even more pointed. Last year's survey showed that the Big Six firms had 91.4 per cent of that market. This year's figures show that the last of the medium-sized firms are being squeezed out even more inexorably. Now 94.1 per cent of the market is in the hands of the Big Six.

In some ways this is not surprising. The trend has been moving this way for years. Companies at the largest end of the business spectrum need the widest services delivered from a depth and range of experience. And bankers also want the most blue chip of names as advisers to their biggest customers.

And so it is that KPMG has 24.6 per cent of the audit business of the UK Top 500. Coopers & Lybrand has 19.5 per cent, Price Waterhouse 18.1 per cent, Ernst & Young 15.7 per cent, Arthur Andersen, including Binder Hamlyn, 8.7 per cent and Deloitte & Touche 7.5 per cent.

The question is, what happens next? If the big firms have 94.1 per cent of their natural markets, then you are beyond the real point of saturation. The audit work of the largest companies may occasionally move from one firm to another as a result of, for example, non-executives wanting a bit of a shake-up and a tendering process. Other audits will move about as a result of mergers and takeovers. But change will be slow. There is none of the excitement of the late 1970s and early 80s when the large firms vacuumed up those large audits still languishing in long-established relationships with firms which had simply not grown with the same speed and panache as their clients.

Growth in this market has now slowed to a crawl. So the strategy looks elsewhere. Having achieved domination of the major audit market, the large firms now look to the middle market, that of SMES, small and medium-sized enterprises.

Here you are looking at the remaining heartland of the medium-sized accounting firms. These are the companies with a turnover of between roughly £3 million and £150 million.

They are family-run, owner-managed or going for rapid growth in new and more

flexible markets. Traditionally they have gone for the smaller accounting firms as their auditors and advisers because in the beginning they neither needed nor could afford the largest firms. They wanted a greater level of advice. They felt they wanted the most elusive of advisory services — accessible partner-level time. The smaller and medium-sized accounting firms have provided all that and have found that, shorn of the largest audit clients in the land, this was their true market. It is also their only large market.

Not surprisingly, the internal strategy documents produced by medium-sized firms talk of this being the natural heartland. Owner-managers talk easily with partners. The size of both the enterprise and the audit firm is similar. Each can identify with the other. The word "synergy" appears like a rash across the pages of strategy.

But now this same sector of the market has started to appear as a very serious part of the

strategy documents of the Big Six firms. The battle lines are being drawn. Estimates suggest that the market consists of around 12,000 companies with business worth about £500 million. Any company with upwards of a £10,000 audit fee or prospects that suggest they could soon be in that league is seen as a possible new client. The market share of the Big Six is already pretty extensive. But no one firm has yet carved out a sizeable advantage. The firms see another bonanza around the corner, if only they can get it right.

And that is going to be the hardest part. It is not a question of bolt-on skills. It is a question of having a much more commercial approach to the nature of the advice needed. And the market is still wary of the largest firms. All the surveys and the anecdotal evidence suggests that smaller companies see the Big Six firms as being bureaucratic and hugely expensive.

It is also assumed that partners are as rare as hen's teeth when it comes to effective, personal and focused advisory time. Smaller companies also tend to perceive the partners in the largest firms as being more involved in arguments over regulatory and attest issues than simple and effective commercial advice.

For the medium-sized accounting firms, these are comforting perceptions. But the Big Six are starting to throw resource at this market. Over the next few years, we will see a change in the market. Only a few medium-sized firms will survive. And steadily the percentage of the market that the largest firms possess will grow.



ROBERT BRUCE

Big Six opt for figure-hugging

THE Big Six firms are still bashful about publishing their figures. Traditionally all the top 50 firms put together some basic figures based on a March year-end. And at the beginning of June these are published as a league table. Not this year. This week the senior partners of the Big Six firms met for dinner to decide what to publish. Rumour has it that KPMG, having

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

published something akin to a full report and accounts in January, is refusing to recalculate to a March year-end for league table purposes. And the other five are set to follow suit. Expect a Top 50 with six empty places at the top.

'Empty' threat

TIMING is all. This year's president's reception of the VAT Practitioners' Group

coincided last week with the day when the world and its wife seemed interested only in how the Chancellor of the Exchequer's shortfall in VAT receipts had come about. John Brown, as president of the VAT Practitioners, had to explain to Valerie Strachan, the chairman of Customs and Excise, what might have happened. "I'm very sorry about the £6 billion," he started. "I'm only responsible for £175 of it."

As for the rest... Strachan was clear in her response. "All suggestions would be gratefully accepted," she told the room full of VAT practitioners. "But if you would all line up at the end of the evening and empty your pockets, we would be very grateful."

ACCA-lade

THE certified accountants have been known to go to the

ends of the earth in their efforts to expand the field of accountancy training. And now they have their reward. The ACCA has won a Queen's Award for export achievement, the first time an accountancy body has done so. Mike Harvey, the ACCA president, even went so far as to claim that almost half last year's total income of £22 million came from overseas. He estimates that it represents some 200,000 marked examination scripts. Awesome.

ROBERT BRUCE

THE TIMES UNIT TRUST INFORMATION SERVICE

[illegible]



■ FILM 1

With McKellen in superbly sinister form, the Thirties updating of *Richard III* makes rip-roaring cinema



■ FILM 2

Poised acting does not rescue *The Birdcage*, a limp and dated remake of *La Cage aux folles*

THE TIMES
ARTS

■ FILM 3

Julianne Moore plays the housewife who succumbs to "environmental illness" in the unnerving *Safe*



■ FILM 4

Jean-Claude Van Damme ripples his torso and saves democracy (again) in *Sudden Death*

CINEMA: Geoff Brown sees Ian McKellen take *Richard III* and turn it into a great night at the pictures

Now showing: the man who would be king

If Shakespeare were alive today, he would be writing for the movies. How many times have we heard this? Completely unprovable, of course: for all we know, the Bard might fancy designing video games or reading the news on Channel 4. But *Richard III*, the film, goes some way towards making the cliché appear true. Take the first flurry of shots. On the soundtrack a tickertape ticks. A tank crashes through a book-lined study, heralding the King's assassination some time in the 1930s. Earl Rivers flies in from America. During victory celebrations in a palace ballroom, Ian McKellen's Duke of Gloucester takes the band singer's microphone. But instead of singing he soliloquises: "Now is the winter of our discontent, made glorious summer..."

Limping through the crowd, this odious character with the thin moustache (think Hitler, think Mosley) beckons us and the camera to follow him. We end up in the king's toilet, the soliloquy still flowing. Shakespeare was never like this before. Even Richard Eyre's 1990 National Theatre production, the film's inspiration, was never like this. The energy is overwhelming. Much of it stems from the telescoped script: what can last four hours on stage now takes 103 minutes. McKellen sends up his own shower of sparks. Transposing Shakespeare's disfigured schemer to the decade that appeared fascist dictators may be an obvious trick, but McKellen's force keeps the characterisation valid. Speaking to others, this murderous usurper in black military uniform coats words with jam. Speaking to us, straight to camera, out come the smirk, the scowl and the conspiring glint. This man, you feel, is truly dangerous.

And yet the film might still have trundled along, half theatre, half cinema, with a director other than Richard Loncraine. Experienced in television and commercials, Loncraine is uninhibited by reverence for the text or the sight of great actors in flight. He pushes the images along like a speed demon; and if some of Shakespeare's words jar in context — "My kingdom for a horse!" Richard cries as his Jeep is hit — then it's just too bad.

Indeed, collisions between text and image are part of the film's jaunty appeal. Here is Lady Anne (Kristin Scott-Thomas) going to hell the modern way, injecting heroin into her thigh and smoking rolled-up banknotes. Here are Annette Bening and Robert Downey Jr. lounging like tourists as Edward IV's American wife and brother-in-law, Locations and computer simulations provide amusement of their own. Edward rules from a riverside St Pancras, while Richard prefers the cold marble of Senate House. As for Bosworth Field, site of the

final battle, that becomes the burnt-out shell of Battersea Power Station.

Shakespeare's words are cut to the quick but otherwise unaltered, apart from the odd rebuke by Richard's chauffeur to a kid jumping on the car's fender. Loncraine's actors vigorously pitch into the charade: with Jim Broadbent as Buckingham, Maggie Smith as a horrified Duchess of York and Nigel Hawthorne as the gentle Clarence, you are guaranteed tasty moments. This may not be the most thoughtful Shakespeare production around; but it certainly makes for rip-roaring cinema.

Richard III

Curzon West End

15, 103 mins

Shakespeare sets the screen on fire

The Birdcage

Empire, 15, 119 mins

Cross, gaudy remake of *La Cage aux folles*

Safe

MGM Piccadilly

15, 118 mins

Unnerving drama about environmental sickness

Sudden Death

Plaza, 18, 110 mins

Van Damme saves the world. Yawn

The *Birdcage* revisits a different set text, Jean Poirot's hit play of the 1970s. *La Cage aux folles*, first filmed in 1978. The American remake, slick and shallow, whisks the story from the French Riviera to South Beach, Florida, where the sun beats down and neon glows at the *Birdcage* nightclub. Robin Williams is its buttoned-down manager. Armand: Nathan Lane his flamboyant partner Albert, the show's drag queen. Panic never far from the surface, strikes anew when Armand's son announces his engagement. How will the ultra-conservative in-laws react to this unorthodox family?

Time has moved on since Michel Serrault dangled a limp wrist in 1978. Now we have AIDS to consider, and we take far less kindly to stereotypes. But this transfer, prepared by distinguished hands (Mike Nichols directs and Elaine May writes), leaves the old gay wonderland untouched. Any topicality in the film comes from the character of Gene Hackman's Republican Senator, co-founder of the Coalition for Moral Order, and his nervously smiling wife, Dianne Wiest.

Unfortunately, it takes more than a joke about Bob Dole to make a movie contemporary. Scratch the surface and *The Birdcage* rattles with age as it cranks up the clichés of farce and drag comedy. On a technical level, you can admire the cast's poise and timing. Williams underplays generously, leaving room for Broadway star Lane to flounce with

finesse and some natural warmth.

In six weeks *The Birdcage* has taken \$100 million at the US box-office. But you expect more from the old team of Nichols and May than a film that only hits the jackpot by draping a corpse in gaudy colours and getting up the gay community's nose.

After *The Birdcage*, the placid surface of Todd Haynes's *Safe* might seem to offer relief. The camera sits still, quietly eyeing Julianne Moore as she goes about the dull business of being a housewife in the San Fernando valley. A couch is delivered in the wrong colour. She goes to the fitness club, and perms her hair; any hard work is left to Fulvia, her Hispanic drudge.

But wait a minute. This film is by the man who told the Karen Carpenter story with a cast of Barbie dolls, and mixed the styles of TV documentary, 1950s sci-fi and homo-erotic drama in *Poison*. If his new film is quiet, the calm must be deceptive. It is. For the housewife's life is under surreptitious attack. Little things unhinge her. Exhaust fumes prompt coughing. She bleeds at the nose. A leaflet informs her about "environmental illness". A video tells her more: there are 6,000 chemicals in daily use, and only 10 per cent have been tested for toxicity.

Suspecting an allergy to modern life, she retreats to a New Age health centre, mooned in the desert in New Mexico. "We are one, we are safe, all's well with our world," the centre's motto reads. But the heroine's health and identity are still being eroded: soon there may be nothing of her left.

This is a most unnerving film. The narrative traps you in a tunnel. There is no escape to other stories, no emergence into sunlight. You must stick with the heroine's disintegrating life. At first comedy is allowed for: you can laugh at the ritual trivialities of suburban life. But by the time the housewife reaches her New Age cocoon, the film has left satire far behind, and leaves us to ponder gloomily on what ravages life more: environmental pollution or human attitudes to sickness.

Haynes gives his lead actress little room to manoeuvre. But Moore — so wonderful in *Vanya on 42nd Street* — so wasted in *Nine Months* — carries the role with great resilience, and never slips into catatonia. *Safe* may not be the most entertaining movie around, but it is made with great care, changes perceptions and provokes serious thought.

Sudden Death provokes nothing except yawns. An extortionist gang takes the American Vice-President hostage during an ice-hockey game in Pittsburgh. After rigging the arena with bombs, they demand \$1 billion from Treasury funds frozen abroad; and the only man who can



Ian McKellen is a villain well worth booing and hissing in his chopped-down and speeded up version of *Richard III*

stop them is the Muscles from Brussels. Jean-Claude Van Damme, on fireman duty in a crowd of 17,000.

Van Damme, still not much of an actor, comes into his own when he gets kicking, and thrusting villains into meat grinders and chip pans. Director Peter Hyams never stints on the action, but you always feel you're watching a machine, not participating in a live drama.

A boring villain further reduces excitement. Powers Boothe's former CIA psycho is suave and sarcastic. His demands include "world peace, an end to bigotry, and no more mini-malls". But the character dulls through repetition, and Boothe's voice brings no refreshment: he sounds like Gregory Peck smeared with honey.

'Entertaining and explosive'

Every week, young film fans discuss the new releases...

RICHARD III

Matt Jones, 23: Some of its power has been lost by reducing the text, but it compensates with a great cast.

Dave Bere, 22: I found the story confusing to follow but the film was lavish and entertaining, with stunning performances from all the actors.

Damian Samuels, 23: It could have done with an extra half-an-hour to tie up some loose ends in the plot, but it was entertaining and explosive.

Jon Gibson, 19: I really love Shakespeare and I'm a big fan of this play. This is a cracking



version and I would recommend everybody see it.

THE BIRDCAGE
Matt: Hilarious — the best comedy of the year so far.

Dave: A superficial farce with some superb acting and hysterical moments.

Damian: Bawdy, sexy and

gorgeous — as funny as *Some Like It Hot*.
Jon: Wonderfully vibrant and deliciously camp.

SAFE

Matt: The style of the film was bizarre — a cross between a social documentary and *Miami Vice* — and failed to captivate.

Dave: Too many relationships were left unexplored and the film left me unsatisfied.

The acting was good, though. Damian: While one would like to commend Todd Haynes for tackling the subject, *Safe* is totally devoid of any verve.

Jon: Very moving, but the action was slow at times.

Lesson from America

BRITAIN'S absurd political obsession with Europe has been reflected in the media, and understandably so. But that has tended to squeeze out traditional sources of enlightenment, particularly America, so that current affairs programming is now more likely to focus on Europe (and Asia) than the United States.

The balance needed restoring, not least because so many American companies have plants in Britain. So a new three-part series, *America Dreaming* (Radio 4, Tuesdays) is to be welcomed. It is flagged as a *World Tonight* special: from that stable one expects quality and this provides it.

One key lesson of Simon Dring's reports is that he could be in Britain, except for the accents. "Downsizing" has been the industrial buzzword of America since the 1980s, as it is here. Americans, like Britons, greet a coming election with scepticism: what can politicians do to save jobs, if industries are set on moving jobs elsewhere?

In Iowa, Dring found once-great providers of jobs reduced to nothing, by strikes in the case of Firestone and by relocation in the case of John Deere. A man who earned the equivalent of £10.86 an hour at Firestone now works in a petrol station opposite the factory for £4.30 an hour. Kenny Merton, a road-maintenance worker, earns £4.86 an hour now, the same as he was paid in the same job 20 years ago. Bill Clinton, on a campaign swing through Iowa, decries the fact that the national minimum wage (£2.83 an hour) has less purchasing power now than it did 40 years ago. So much for that panacea.

The upshot is that 43 million American jobs have been lost since 1979 and the number of people on subsistence incomes is higher than ever. Old class divisions, always measured in America by income rather than by social status, have all but disappeared.

As Merton said: "We used to have a lower class, a middle class and an upper class. But right now you either have money or you don't. There's no middle class."

The Midwest has gone the way of the old British industrial heartlands, bringing fear and insecurity. The role of trade unions has been crucial, for their power forced up wages in the 1970s.

Now American companies have a simple message: work for what we offer or we will move to another state. Iowa is already one of the poorest states in America, but there is always a neighbouring country, Mexico, where people will work for \$1 an hour.

Throughout Dring's tour of the homes and the bowling alleys of the insecure and the dispossessed, we kept hearing the unspoken: if finding cheaper labour is just a matter of tipping sticks and moving from one United State to another, what would happen in a United States of Europe?

PETER BARNARD

IAN MCKELLEN ANNETTE BENING JIM BROADBENT ROBERT DOWNEY JR. NIGEL HAWTHORNE KRISTIN SCOTT-THOMAS MAGGIE SMITH JOHN WOOD

THE MAN WHO WOULD BE KING

I CAN SMILE... AND MURDER WHILE I SMILE

RICHARD III

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■ THEATRE 1
Shades of George Bernard Shaw are evoked by Peter Whelan's anti-Royalist play, *Divine Right*



■ THEATRE 2
Molière sparkles in a lively new translation as the Almeida puts *Tartuffe* on stage

THE TIMES ARTS



■ THEATRE 3
Adrian Noble's intelligent RSC production of *Romeo and Juliet* comes to the Barbican



■ OPERA
A dark and dreary staging, but at least the singing has perked up in Covent Garden's *Tosca*

THEATRE: Sympathetic royal in republican drama; rhyming for good reason in *Tartuffe*; Romeo as repressed adolescent

Good night, sweet prince

The trouble with playing imaginative games of "what if" with the Royal Family is that reality tends to be more improbable than invention. Four years ago which dramatist could have dreamed up a scenario in which the Princess of Wales declared her husband unfit to rule, appointed herself the Queen of People's Hearts, and took the post so literally that a television crew could shoot her watching someone's ticker being cut up? By comparison Peter Whelan's futuristic fancy, which is that Prince Charles celebrates the millennium by renouncing his claim to the throne in favour of his 18-year-old son, seems almost workaday.

Fortunately, Whelan and his director, Bill Alexander, lift the idea far above the workaday. If anything, *Divine Right* is too ambitious, for it actually consists of two plays crammed into 180 minutes, each timely and enthralling but neither developed as fully as it might be. One is mainly concerned with the politicking of a republican faction in and out of the Commons. The other shows the

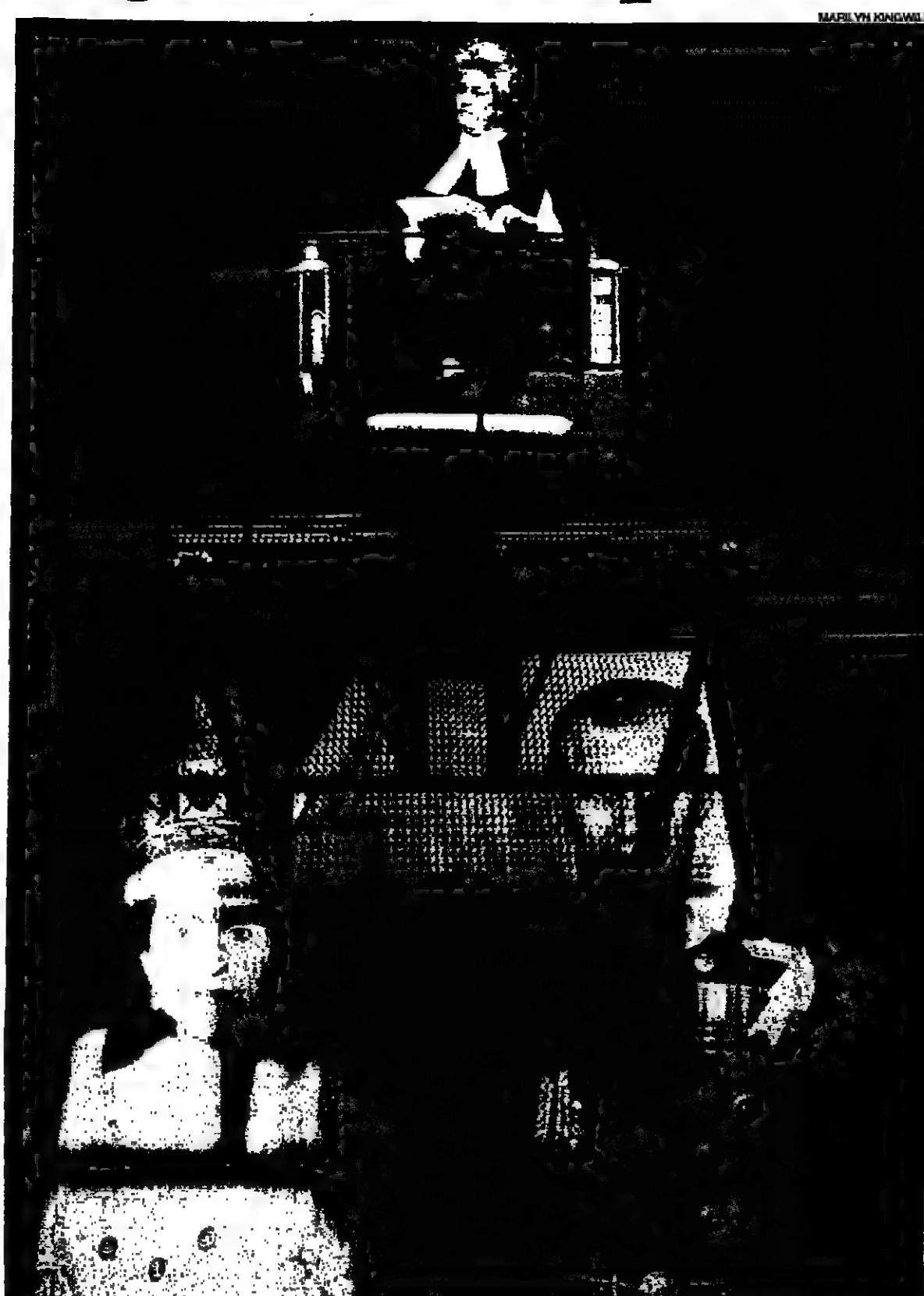
Divine Right Birmingham Rep

Queen's grandson and heir doing what Henry V did in Eastcheap and, later, at Agincourt: acquainting himself with the feelings of people unlikely to be invited to royal garden parties.

True, each allows plenty of thoughts about the uses and abuses of monarchy to come articulately to the surface. In play one, for instance, a republican witly suggests that the Royal Family is so adept at "reinventing the 19th century" that Britain's movers and shakers end up sucked into "a never-ending Merchant-Ivory movie". In play two, a Nigerian shopkeeper passionately argues that monarchy might have saved his nation from dictatorship, corruption and chaos. Yet would not the big playwriting Davids, Hare and Edgar, have dealt more trenchantly with the wheeling and dealing in play one?

Here, we get parliamentary wrangles in which the leader of a "sanitised, deodorised, decaffeinated" Labour government — Paul Connolly proving with every smile and gesture that Blair imitation will soon be a major industry — plays games of loyaler-than-thou with his Tory foes. But behind the scenes plots are being hatched between an unregenerate socialist MP (boot-faced Mary Jo Randle), a self-made Tory meritocrat (smirking Ian Gelder) and an eccentric millionaire (bubbling Joe Mella) who thinks the end of "Norman" rule would reunite Britain and Ireland.

Their conversations suggest deep differences about the republican president — should he be Thomas More or Mussolini? — and these are only half-explored when the prince's secret trek through England ends. This has introduced him to a despairing OAP who begs him to mug and murder her, a fly expatriate estate agent on a trip



Shock to the constitution: *Divine Right* concerns parliamentary wrangles about the future of the monarchy

home, a distraught father who thinks bad royal example has destroyed family values and wrecked his own daughter, skinheads who worship the Queen as an English Führer, and poverty and disillusionment galore.

It is a pretty partial portrait of England, but that does not altogether matter, for, as played by William Manning, the bomber-jacketed

prince is a touchingly real character. He is considerate, conscientious, patient, perceptive, sensitive, vulnerable, and everything some of us think Prince Charles is and hope William will be. One longs to see more of him. For Whelan handles his scenes with a warmth Hare and Edgar would find hard to match.

Here is the play's irony. Whelan, a

professed republican, has made a scion of Windsor easily his most sympathetic character. Whether that influences his ending, though, I shall only hint at. This prince is the spiritual heir of King Magnus, admirable protagonist of Shaw's *Apple Cart*. Let me leave an enjoyable evening right there.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE

Boys and girls come out to kill

Romeo and Juliet Barbican

THE Montagues and Capulets are definitely resident in Italy in Adrian Noble's intelligent RSC production (sponsored by Allied Domecq), which has transferred from Stratford. Zubin Varla's dark Romeo and Lucy Whybrow's fair Juliet fall for each other in a vintage Verona of wooden shutters and weathered plaster. The high alleys are laced with washing lines. Life is spent at fresco, although all ways with a nagging sense of enclosure and rapidly narrowing perspectives, pressed home by Kendra Ulyatt's design.

The Montague boys turn up, in carnival mood and grotesque masks, for an open air ball in the Capulets' iron-gated courtyard. By day, bringing together the historic and the contemporary, these youths loiter at pavement cafes, spasmodically swordfighting.

The costumes place us formally in the Victorian era:

tailcoats and farthingales. Verona's inhabitants, in fact, look distinctly British. Darlene Johnson's blonde, coiffed Lady Capulet has the seeds of a hardy maternal Sloane. Christopher Benjamin, as Juliet's father, is the fond papa who turns swiftly into a manhandling patriarch when disobeyed.

This Anglo-Mediterranean vision questions cultural pigeonholing. It suggests constrictions lurking in Latin cultures and passionate feelings churning inside supposedly inhibited Brits. The production's emphasis is on intense adolescent emotions; behaviour veers between childish fits and adult action.

The Montague boys are public school brats. The piazza is a dangerous playground

where blowing raspberries escalates into fatal stabbings. Mark Lockyer's Mercutio is a manic joker, delightfully witty but worrying: sparkily inventive but unstable. His Queen Mab fantasy overwhelms him like a bad dream. When his best friend falls in love with someone else, he fights back the tears.

When, in turn, Romeo first enters, seeing the brisk exit of his parents in the opposite direction, the diminutive Varla betrays a nervous spasm of blinking. The loss of a precious love reduces people to near-fits of rage and grief.

Or that is the idea. The disappointment, in practice, is that scarcely anyone is letting their emotions genuinely loose. Lady Capulet is only vaguely cold. Her husband is never really frighteningly violent. Romeo and Juliet's ticks and tantrums look tacked on now and then.

Varla and Whybrow, who

have matured since Stratford, now speak verse with confidence. But that is not passion. The chronic problem is this: there is no chemistry between these lovers, unless you count herbal concoctions.

Still, Julian Glover's Scots Friar Lawrence is outstanding: downing a stiff espresso before picking down flowers; earthy, amusingly exasperated, firm, ultimately desperate. Susan Brown's Nurse, although having more social polish than humour, is refreshingly unworried.

Romeo and Juliet get into their stride too, once forced apart and racing into the arms of death. Whybrow grows swiftly into a determined woman, disillusioned by her elders, holding on to her ideals. Romeo, poisoned, dies in real pain, ecstatically released but not even granted time for a last kiss.

KATE BASSETT



Lucy Whybrow and Zubin Varla play the star-crossed lovers in Adrian Noble's staging of *Romeo and Juliet*

OPERA: Impressive new principals breathe fire into a Puccini night hampered by tame staging and conducting

Eye-opener still kept in the dark

Tosca Covent Garden

THE Royal Opera's revival of *Tosca* in December was one of the most dismal nights of the season. Considerable redress is now made with the present, final run of four performances, strongly cast and with each of the three principals playing their roles here for the first time.

Anthony Michaels-Moore has sung bits of Scarpia on record but until now not the whole role on stage. From the moment in Act I when he emerges from shadows, of which there are more than enough during the evening, he scarcely puts an elegantly shod foot wrong.

His chief of police has command and also the ability to slide back into the darkness to watch Tosca flap

about in church, looking for her lover. Michaels-Moore's still cherubic features take on the smug smile of the school bully while Cavardossi is given another twist on the torturer's rack. His baritone is currently in tremendous shape, rising powerfully over the chorus in the *Te Deum* and carrying a Gobbi-like snarl. The overall aura of silken venom makes him the best Scarpia here since Samuel Ramey.

José Cura, the Argentinian tenor, has been taking on new roles and new composers for the ROH at an

exceptional rate. Puccini's Cavardossi is the latest and he sings the painter with strong, burnished tones now expected of him.

Parts like Samson may have taken a bit of the lyricism from the voice, but Cura manages very well the gentle phrasing of memories and hopes in Act III. But the victory cries of the middle act suggest that the

heroic repertory will be his forte, in all senses of the word.

Cura added a nice dash of petulance in the opening scene with Tosca, remarking that he wants to get back to work and stop canoodling before the madonna. Tosca responds with equal irritation at such ungallant behaviour. She is sung by Nelly Miricioiu, a house favourite back in the 1980s and now returning after a long absence. Both voice and figure have filled out a bit, but she remains a first-class actress, flirting and cajoling and then at the

end re-enacting Scarpia's death with graphic detail. Her soprano now has an east European throb, not always used to good effect. *Vissi d'arte* was taken too quietly for too long to cast its spell.

Here Edward Downes may have to take some blame. He has been opera-hopping this month, declining *Nabucco* and taking over *Tosca* from Evelino Pidò. He took an almost serene view of Puccini, choosing slow tempos, full of orchestral colour but light on drama. Perhaps he was numbed by a production which now covers much of the crucial action in darkness.

JOHN HIGGINS

All the better for verse

Tartuffe Almeida

across the stage to hide under a table. A happy end, you might suppose, with virtue triumphant, were it not that only dramatic licence has brought about the hypocrite's downfall: Kent's judgment is right

to make Orgon's immediate future with his wife look decidedly rocky. McDiarmid, a master of tatty irony, evidently relishes the snap in Wilbur's lines, and in one neatly orchestrated scene with Diane Bull's unsquashable Dorine goes hammer and tongs with her.

Almost forgotten between them, Emma Chambers's Mariane, previously a bubbly creature — and with a pretty habit of tossing her side-curls — is now too terrified even to snivel. In moments like this, McDiarmid has the look of a furious, bleached parrot. Wilbur, Kent and the actor playing Cléante (David Lyon) even make the play's moral aphorisms worth listening to, and this, in contrast to last year's experience, is a really welcome experience.

JEREMY KINGSTON

DONALD COOPER



Hidden lust: Ian McDiarmid's Orgon is besotted with Tom Hollander as Molière's pious hypocrite, Tartuffe

Macbeth

by William Shakespeare

Directed by Tim Albery. Design by Stewart Laing. Lighting by Nina Jordan. Set by Nina Jordan. Costumes by Nina Jordan. Props by Nina Jordan. Hair by Nina Jordan. Make-up by Nina Jordan. Sound by Nina Jordan. Music by Nina Jordan. Production by Nina Jordan.

Macbeth ROGER ALLAM Lady Macbeth BRID BRENNAN Macduff COLUM CONVEY

Donalbain ARTHUR COX Ross ROBERT DEMEGER Malcolm SEBASTIAN HARCOCHE

First Witch JANET WHITESIDE Banquo PHILIP QUAST Porter ADRIAN SCHILLER

Directed by TIM ALBERY. Designed by STEWART LAING.

Lighting by NINA JORDAN. Set by NINA JORDAN.

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Superman in a Jaeger suit

Peter Ackroyd on the fund of energy that drove a genius in flight from the physical

In this intriguing study, part biography and part sexual case history, Sally Peters has the courage to take Bernard Shaw seriously. In one of those *Maxims for Revolutionists* which preface *Man and Superman*, Shaw declared that "The unconscious self is the true genius."

In this spirit Sally Peters tries to isolate and to examine those emotions or situations of which Shaw himself might not have been aware. It is as if she were trying to bring into clear focus the invisible man who accompanied him on his great journey, but whom the artist himself refused to recognise.

She also goes on to suggest that this invisible man may even have been homosexual but the point is, perhaps, debatable. Hers is in any case a dangerous and speculative venture, as any textual scholar will tell you (if he has time to lift his nose from the page), but it is not without its rewards. It is possible that some writers are great precisely because they cannot, or will not, understand where the sources of their greatness lie.

The curious arrangements of Shaw's family and household during his childhood, for example, seem to have left him with the fantasy of being "a founding"; indeed, like many great artists who manage to project some impression of their personality to the public, he was largely if not wholly self-created. In flight from his own family, he established an intimate if imaginary alternative household which included Shakespeare, Goethe and Mozart. He bartered the security of mundane and familial ties, according to this account, for the more precarious but permanent bonds of cultural inheritance.

Sally Peters is very good on the symbolic detail of that life which he preferred to forget. At the age of 16 he became a Dublin clerk, for example, and intermittently dreamt of the office for much of his life. Even the most tatty business premises can be the arena for tyranny and cowardice, and Shaw's continuing horror at his temporary confinement is a sure sign that the carapace of the successful artist in his case

concealed a more frightened and awkward creature.

He was so afraid of life, in fact, that he decided to dominate it. He controlled the chaos of the world by simply treating it as the material for his art: if he moved fast or far enough, no one would ever catch him. On looking back at this "destiny" he claimed that "like Goethe, I knew all along"; but he could not have been so certain at the time.

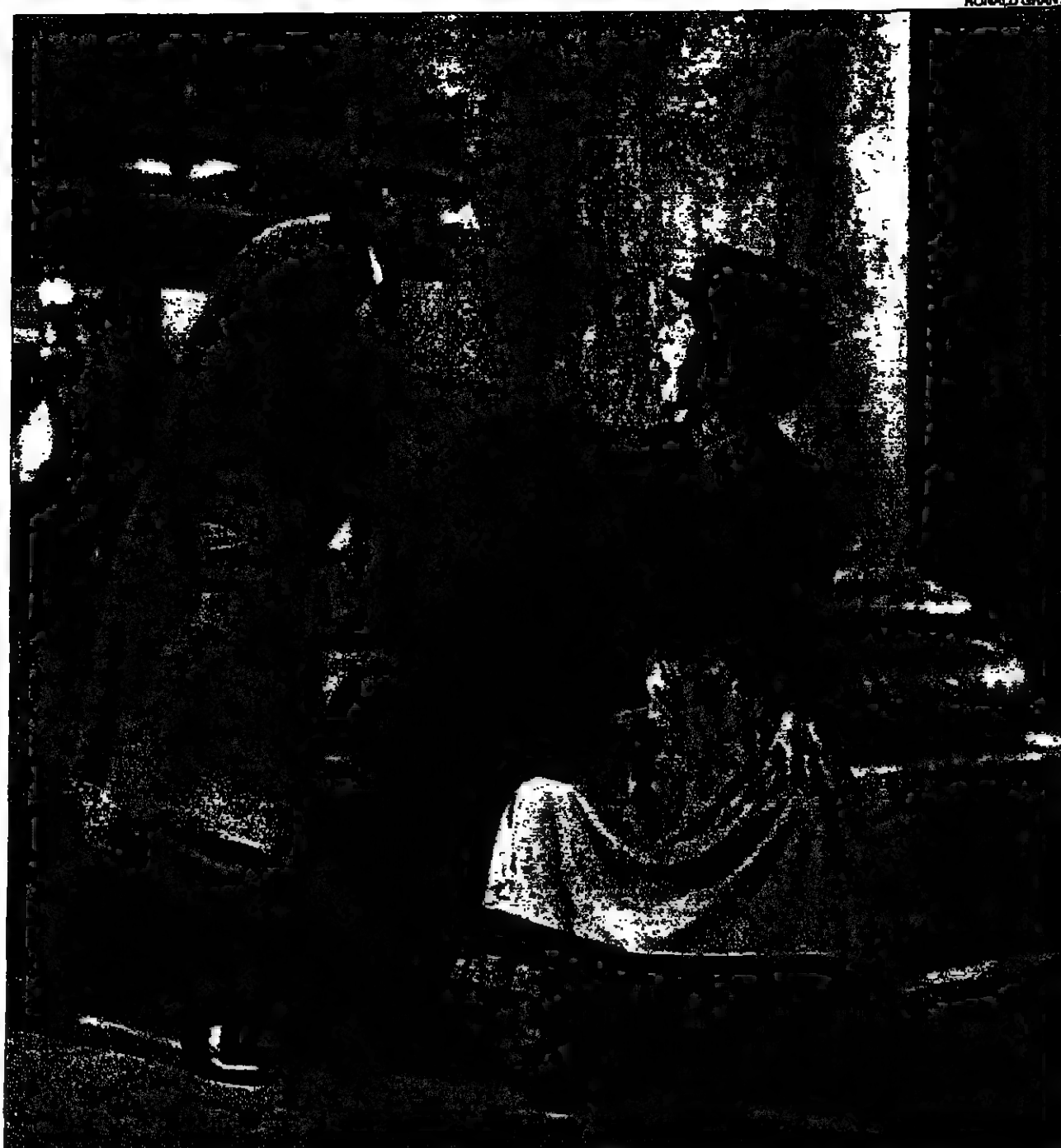
Eventually he moved from Dublin to London, so that he might be able to recreate himself in every sense. The process of self-dramatisation began when he started to write musical criticism under an assumed name; when not scribbling down reviews in the Reading Room of the British Museum he spent his time, like any late Romantic, in studying Marx and Wagner.

He also began to read books of etiquette, but the drawing room was not his natural habitat. He was so aware of his own talent, and

so frightened of its being rebuffed, that he shunned social life. He preferred to lecture in under-heated halls, or make speeches on street corners.

He wasted a great deal of time as a journalist as well (he even descended to book reviewing) but the years under the dome of the Reading Room were helpful in one sense. He was biding his time, waiting for the right moment to strike, sharpening his imagination so that it would effortlessly impale the public. A sense of occasion is necessary for genius, of course, but Shaw also possessed those two other attributes which are essential for his proper growth: he named them himself, accurately, as "irrepressible gaiety" and "a prodigious fund of vital energy". No writer should attempt to take on the world without them.

There are times when Sally Peters's fondness for psychological jargon affects her prose, but she is generally very good at describing the energetic vagaries of Shaw's ambition. His was an energy of the mind, however, and not of the body. Shaw's attitudes towards vegetarianism and alco-



A fear of the feminine? Rex Harrison and Audrey Hepburn in *My Fair Lady* (1964), adapted from Shaw's *Pygmalion*

hol, let alone his health in general, are in that sense highly significant — rooted, as they were, in his deep sense of personal threat and his disgust at the physicality of his own body. He learnt to conquer life by etherealising it and turning it into a play while at the same time he conducted his affairs, both social and romantic, as a form of drama. In fact, like other artists who live in fear or distrust of physical being, he lived off words. In his various and always theoretical love affairs he sighed words and he cried them. In the ordinary world he was a very lean man dressed in a yellow Jaeger suit; in his letters he was a demon, a god and a Casanova. The amorous

correspondence between him and Ellen Terry must constitute the longest epistolary novel since *Pamela*.

He managed the same trick with his drama since, by writing essays and "maxims" around it, he was able to fashion the very climate of opinion by which he wished to be judged. He did not only create plays; he created his critics. "Art," as Sally Peters puts it, "was a way to live on the earth while transcending it."

So he remained in all respects manipulative and apart. Was it Oscar Wilde who said that Shaw had not an enemy in the world but that

none of his friends liked him? He was delicate and fastidious, shying away from any touch of flesh and hiding his fear or guilt in that mist of words which followed him everywhere. Sally Peters detects within him not so much a fear of the feminine as a fear of femininity, especially his own. In fact, one of the central arguments of this study is that Shaw was a latent or at least non-practising homosexual; certainly, in the Jaeger suit, he would have made an impractical one.

He might possibly be placed somewhere upon what is already a very long list, but the importance of such a position is a matter of debate. Not everyone is wholly convinced

by what Sally Peters calls "current gay theorists".

Her book is in fact most interesting on Shaw's career and, since it is concerned with his "ascendancy", it is not particularly surprising that she should devote less than 30 pages to his last 30 years. Yet there may be a larger point to be made. Shaw ceased to be wholly interesting when he had created the persona which was to guide him through the rest of his life. His struggle was more significant than his victory, for in the process he found a vision of the world. Or perhaps it found him. "This is the true joy in life," as he said, "the being used for a purpose recognised by yourself as a mighty one."

From peacock to sparrow

DJUNA BARNES was an early practitioner of the celebrity interview. Her work for American magazines was admired for its wit ("If you are sharp you can catch glimpses of [Diamond Jim] Brady between his jewellery") but not always trustworthy: she belonged to that school which lunches with the subject first, and invents the conversation later. "Have you been making notes?" "I don't have to. My memory makes a paragraph out of a note automatically."

Why not put words into her subjects' mouths? Few interviewees could match her *aperçus*. Yet for years she scorned writing fiction, "things made up entirely out of thin air". And as Philip Herring demonstrates, she could never have invented fiction more compelling and bizarre than her own life.

She was born in 1892 in a log cabin on a mountain overlooking the Hudson River. Her American father, Wald, never bothered much with making a living but took a mistress, adding five more siblings to the four Djuna already had. Her grandmother, Zadel, was a journalist, poet and advocate of free love; a progressive influence on them all. Zadel had a salon in London in the 1890s — in unlikely Shepherd's Bush — to which Oscar Wilde's mother Speranza, and Max's daughter Tussy came.

Djuna shared a bed with her grandmother and seems to have indulged in peculiar horse-play with Zadel's pendulous breasts. And it fell to Djuna to mop up after all Wald's children, which threw her off the idea of motherhood for life.

Small wonder that she grew up strange, bisexual, egocentric. She was an adventurous young journalist, "willing to undertake any stunt — including being dropped from a high building into a fireman's blanket, and describing how it feels to be forcibly fed. She could turn in a clever piece on how to look decorous when found dead by suicide. She called her journalism "rubbish" but was earning \$1,000 a piece by 1921. Her early lovers were a rum lot notably Fuzzi Handstien, who became Hitler's foreign press minister after the Führer heard him play the piano. He wrote marches for the Hitler Youth, but saw through the Nazi tuggery and got out. He abandoned Djuna saying he

must have a German mother for his children.

By the time she arrived in Paris in the 1920s she had decided that women were better in bed: Edna St Vincent Millay was one of those sampled during her Greenwich Village days. Thebna Wood was her great passion; another was Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven, celebrated as the Dadaists and given to wearing a birdcage with birds on her head, tin can swinging from her nipples and black painted lips.

In this *galère*, Djuna developed her world-weary, fast journalism: discarding hard fact, she could spot the quintessence of her subjects' celebrity; but she, the interviewer — chic, amusing — was the real star. The madly bohemian café society of 1920s Paris, where everyone drank a lot and wrote a bit, was hers to seize. Her writing could be vivid (Kiki de Montparnasse "raises her mandarin eyes, slanting with kohl") aphoristic ("In youth one may have been a peacock; in old age one is a sparrow")

but also often impenetrable: how can a laugh sound "like a submerged French pastry shop"? Her one famous novel, *Nightwood* (1936) — "a soul talking to itself in the heart of the night", but actually a vengeful tirade on Thebna — earned her the patronage of T. S. Eliot, but her American publisher had to admit that "it is very difficult to edit the story from the mass of brilliant but somewhat mad-writing".

PEGGY GUGGENHEIM took her up and gave her an income but her decline (to age 90) was long and sad. James Joyce, an admirer, gave her unbound proofs of *Ulysses*, which she later sold in poverty, to Harvard for \$125. In later years Djuna wrote that she had always feared the poorhouse — reminiscent of Diana Vreeland's conviction that every woman sees herself ending her days rattling a tin can — but even as a reformed alcoholic, prone to melancholia and chronic grouches, she retained her snappy wit ("Do you see why women have become bitches and harpies and burses? Because men can go to bed with them only so.") "Keep on writing," she urged Antonia White. "It's a woman's only hope, except for lace-making." How true.

Valerie Grove

DJUNA
The Life and Work of Djuna Barnes
By Philip Herring
Viking, £20

Dizzy heights at the Hotel Cecil

Andrew Roberts

THE AGE OF
SALISBURY, 1881-1902
By Richard Shannon
Longman, £72

Until Disraeli's 1874 election victory, intelligent observers assumed, with the Tories having lost five elections in a row, that the future of British politics would inevitably be Liberal. Yet in the 22 years since, the Conservatives have been in government for three-quarters of the time. They now rate as the most consistently successful political party in any Western democracy. In this book, Richard Shannon, Professor of Modern History at the University of Wales and author of *Crisis of Imperialism* and *The Age of Disraeli* explains why. Through a scholarly and painstaking analysis of the sources, he ascribes the startling transformation in Tory fortunes to a mixture of deliberate leader-

ship, political accidents and what T. S. Eliot called history's "vast, impersonal forces".

The leadership was provided as much by Lord Salisbury as by Disraeli. In statistical terms, Salisbury was a far more successful Conservative leader than his predecessor, forming three governments lasting 14 years compared to Disraeli's two lasting six.

But whereas Salisbury gave the electorate reassurance, integrity, a growing empire and genuine candour, Dizzy of-

fered wit, style and stardust. Salisbury had an identifiable political philosophy but Disraeli created a myth, and as Shannon points out, as a result "Disraeli dead was more important for his career than Disraeli alive".

Dead, Disraeli could be the advocate of Tory democracy; alive he did all in his power to promote aristocratic government and stymie the burgeoning National Union, advocate of true Tory democracy.

Dead, he could inspire the Primrose League, established in 1883 in his memory and which numbered 1.5 million people by the century's end, many of them working class men and women; alive he could only offer paltry acts of social reform to halt progress.

Dead, Disraeli could be the Suez Canal-buying, India Expressing, Crystal Palace speechifying Earl of Beaconsfield, but had he survived he would have had to face the sober realities of German and American long-term threats to British supremacy.

These instead had to be dealt with by Salisbury, who while paying all necessary lip service to the Dizzy myth, spent his 17 years as party leader producing solid achievements greater than those his old Chief managed, for all his genius at prestidigitation.

There never was much uplift to be had from Salisbury, argues Shannon, whose book concentrates mainly on domestic politics.

Shannon ascribes the emergence of the new suburban "Villa Toryism" to Salisbury's psephological genius during the struggles over parliamentary reform in 1884-85. Salisbury's Conservative Party stood, not for nebulous Disraelian "uplift", but for respectability, individual rights, social mobility, the rule of law, a market-driven economy and non-collectivist social betterment of the people — a platform that has served the party well for over a century.

The modern perception of Salisbury as heavy and



Salisbury uniting the nation: this patriotic cartoon by Tom Merry appeared in *St Stephen's Review*, 1891

humourless could not be further from the truth. It was certainly a dry, intellectual, even cynical English wit, but it is still funny today. Indeed, Salisbury has the power genuinely to amuse long after some of Disraeli's more contrived witticisms have palled.

Shannon correctly identifies Lord Randolph Churchill as a dangerous demagogue, who Salisbury had to defeat if he was to preserve the aristocratic cousinhood which ruled Tory politics from the machinations of the National Union caucus. A Churchill victory would have led to directly-elected party leaders and eventually the end of limited government.

That Salisbury was able to stave off his post-1900 government with relations that it was nicknamed the Hotel Cecil, and then pass on the premiership itself to his nephew Arthur Balfour, is testament to the scale of his victory over

Churchill. Shannon is left agnostic at the naked nepotism but prefers it to the Churchill alternative.

It is clear that professor Shannon has thought deeply over many years about the impact Lord Salisbury made on Tory politics. He describes the party Salisbury built as "the best representative in British politics of the cultural and political values of the Victorian bourgeois world", and as such a fine counterbalance to the forces of totalitarianism of this century. The excellent *Longman History of the Conservative Party*, spanning the period 1830-1975, is after many years, almost complete. Shannon's two contributions have been central to the project, showing how the party Disraeli called an "Organised Hypocrisy" became a formidable election winner.

Andrew Roberts is writing the authorised life of Lord Salisbury

A matter of consent

Many readers may be daunted when faced with *Carnal Knowledge*: 250 pages about rape — rape by strangers, friends, relatives and husbands, in war, gang rape and at the end of it all a system where most rapists are apparently never brought to justice.

It is an uncomfortable, but an important and serious book. Sue Lees, a professor at the University of North London, has studied rape thoroughly. She uses the findings of three research studies; 31 rape trials were analysed and 116 victims of rape or attempted rape were questioned.

The results are disturbing. Rape victims suffer guilt and shame. Many cannot go out or have normal relationships. Some cannot stop scrubbing themselves. Many lose all their confidence. One in five of the women were virgins at the time of the rape and most were raped by men they knew.

The research dispels of many stereotypes. The press will normally depict rapists as loners or psychopaths; but they are usually acquaintances, not strangers. They are not likely to be black or to come from any particular class, or to be noticeably different; they usually seem normal and often charming. Their distinguishing feature is their extreme, hostile attitude to women.

Sue Lees's thesis is that most rape victims in Britain get little redress. "I have been left to rot by society and no one helped me," one woman said. The number of women reporting rape has doubled since 1985. Police handling of rape complainants has greatly improved. Yet the conviction rate is falling. About 8.4 per cent of reported cases result in a conviction. Many cases are dropped.

The adversarial justice system, where the objective is not to reach the truth but to win, is at its most flawed in these cases of interpersonal private violence. In most rape trials the question is not whether or not the act took place but whether or not the woman consented to it. To prove that she consented the



Brutal: Goya's *Scenes from the Spanish War* (c. 1810)

Vivien Stern

CARNAL
KNOWLEDGE
By Sue Lees
Hamish Hamilton, £20

defence must show her to be a liar and of dubious reputation. Legal measures brought in to stop a woman's past life and sexual history being used to damage her credibility have not succeeded.

So women who take the decision to report rape are subjected to vicious questioning by the defence in order to discredit them and prove consent. How much have they had to drink? Have they (if they are white) had relationships in the past with black men? Is their underwear transparent? Their knickers are displayed in the courtroom, handled with rubber gloves.

If they seem calm and cool in court it will be suggested that they must be lying. If it had really been rape they are upset or more upset. If they are hysterical and not to be believed. An absence of injuries suggests they did not struggle enough, even though they may have had a knife at their throats. One judge set out his view of how women provoke rape: by the clothes they

wear, drinking a lot, dancing provocatively, going back to a defendant's flat, being out late, asking the defendant back to their home, taking drugs and soliciting.

The credibility of the male defendants, on the other hand, is assessed on their profession, their lack of a previous criminal record and their social standing. No questions are asked about their past life or their drinking habits.

The press often presents the view that women alleging rape are making malicious allegations to get revenge or cover up a sexual encounter. This book makes it clear how unlikely this is. It is hard enough for genuine victims to get their case to court.

Sue Lees has some proposals for reform. She welcomes the 1991 decision that rape can take place in marriage. She wants to see a legal definition of consent based on an idea of mutually negotiated sexual relations. She asks, "Who represents the woman? Certainly not the prosecution, which represents the state. More women judges would help, as would more judicial training."

These are worthy proposals in the short term. But the book is asking two deeper questions. Is the adversarial justice system the best we could have? And what are we to do about the violence that provides so many young men with their only role and identity?

PURE PLEASURE

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PILCHER

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Handwritten signature or mark at the bottom of the page.

Ben Macintyre on Allan Pinkerton, the dogged, bullying Scot who was America's first private eye

In the name of the law

ALLAN
PINKERTON
The Eye Who
Never Slept
By James Mackay
Mainstream, £20

Hollywood owes an incalculable debt to Allan Pinkerton, the Scottish-born founder of the great American detective agency and the granddaddy of gumshoes.

As the first "private eye", a term that evolved from his motto "We Never Sleep" below the image of an open eye, Pinkerton and his men were responsible for waging war on some of the most notorious outlaws in post-bellum America, from Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid to the James Brothers. The Pinkertons also set up the first military intelligence gathering service during the Civil War and established the closest thing to an American Scotland Yard.

But while many of Pinkerton's adventures have become picaresque legends, the detective himself remains a largely unknown and deeply controversial figure.

An inspired detective and upholder of law and liberty, Pinkerton was also a rather repellent man, a bully, a prig

and, all too often, a thundering bore.

James Alexander Mackay, the award-winning biographer of Robert Burns, is the first historian to attempt to shade in both the darker and lighter sides of Pinkerton and the result is the tightest and most reliable account so far, a portrait of a man at once deeply admirable and quite obnoxious.

Filleting out the real Allan Pinkerton is no easy task, despite the vast quantity of documentary material stored at the Pinkerton archive in California, for in addition to his talents as a sleuth, the detective was a master of public relations who churned out no fewer than 18 books running to more than three million words in total. Most were penned by ghost-writers, many are factually dubious and all are egregiously self-flattering.

Born into grim Gorbals poverty in 1819, the young Pinkerton was a militant Chartist who fled Scotland (and possible prosecution) to set himself up as a cooper in Illinois. There he became, in

quick succession, an amateur snooper, a detective in the Chicago police and finally the head of a company that co-ordinated a vast world-wide network of detective agents and hunt-

ed down crime of all sorts. Dogged, energetic and ridiculously brave, Pinkerton was a fierce opponent of slavery and an active station-master in the underground railroad, smuggling slaves to freedom in Canada. With the outbreak of war he became Lincoln's spy-master, run-

ning agents into Confederate territory and exposing treachery within the Washington political elite.

Pinkerton's tools may now seem obvious — the methodical accumulation of evidence, detailed criminal records and a reputation for unshakeable honesty — but at a time when the forces of law and order were criminally inefficient, he was a glaring, self-promoting exception.

But Pinkerton was also an anti-crime crusader, propelled by an unwavering faith in his own moral rectitude.

"I feel no power on earth is able to check me, no power in Heaven or Hell can influence me when I know I am in the

right," he once wrote. As far as can be ascertained, there was never a single occasion on which he believed himself to be in the wrong.

Like most zealots, Pinkerton was at heart a moral bully and the most valuable and novel aspects of Mr Mackay's biography lie in its exposure of the psychological puritanism that drove his lust for upholding the law. The author does his best to endear his subject, but he is too honest to hide the picture of a sanctimonious egotist who was often cruel and domineering to his family, autocratic towards his employees and insufferably pleased with himself.

Having made his fortune and reputation, Pinkerton built himself a grand estate in Illinois with 85,000 imported Scottish larches, a retinue of black hunkies in blue uniforms and murals of Civil

War heroics. From here he continued to run his agency with a wrathful rod of iron. He died in 1884, celebrated by some, loathed by many and irascible to the last.

Pinkerton's estate is now a ruin; but the Pinkerton Detective Agency has become a security firm with 250 offices around the world and 50,000 employees which, among other tasks, arranges security at the Oscar night ceremonies.

The heroic outlaw, the romantic bandit with the heart of gold, is a staple and nourishing myth of popular American culture. But Allan Pinkerton, who unintentionally furnished Hollywood with some of its best tales, was exactly the reverse: a man who made conformity to the law into his religion, and whose heart was carved from the coldest Scottish granite.

Ben Macintyre's forthcoming book, *The Napoleon of Crime, a biography of Adam Worth, one of the Pinkertons' most celebrated quarry*

Still dancing to the music of time

Derwent May is charmed by the diaries of a writer whose recollections reflect his own life and his fictional creations

Anthony Powell was 90 last December, and does not stir much now from his house in Somerset, where he lives with his wife Violet. But his mind and imagination are as alert as when, over a period of 25 years from his forties to his sixties, he wrote his great comedy about that swath of English life where society intermingles with Bohemia, *A Dance to the Music of Time*.

This is the second volume of his diaries to be published, and it is both startling and delightful to find how similar the flavour of them is to the flavour of *Dance* (as he calls it). In the novel sequence, the polar opposites around which the whole panorama revolves are the glorious comic figure of Widmerpool, who is pure wit-to-power without a trace of human understanding, and Nick, the narrator, who seems to see everything, and in a wholly natural way to be present whenever anything interesting is happening.

Powell may not move far from Somerset in these journals, yet like Nick, with his observations and his memories — and now his abundant hospitality, always giving lunch to visitors — he brings another fascinating world into being about him.

He goes to the doctor's for a tetanus booster. "Tetanus Booster would be a good name for a US Senator, probably a Southerner," he thinks. (That "probably a Southerner" is the authentic note of Nick.) He reads a biography of John Betjeman, and memories crowd in — how when Betjeman was staying at the house of Powell's sister-in-law, Lady Mary Clive, before it was "on the grid", he insisted on being driven to the nearest house with electricity so that he could use his electric razor. That reminds him in turn that Betjeman had once made a passionate speech against electric carillons in churches. "What a hypocrite that man is," Ronald Knox had commented.

The novelist Vidia Naipaul comes to lunch. (An extra piquancy is added to the diaries, of course, by the fact that all its characters are real and many well-known.) What Powell records from his conversation is just the kind of unexpected remark Nick would have noted with casual delight when Naipaul made a speech in America after collecting a literary prize, he was "a shade disappointed he had not managed to bore more acutely an audience of rich businessmen".

There is the fastidious Naipaul in a nutshell.

Robert Conquest comes to lunch on his visits from America and this always brings up thoughts of their friend Philip Larkin. Conquest tells him that among scabrous elements in Larkin's letters there are "odds and ends of fladge". Powell shrewdly anticipates what the reaction will be when the letters are published. The savage remarks about each other in the letters of Larkin, Conquest and Kingsley Amis are "probably acceptable within circle of three old friends as satire that will be understood, but rather different when offered to general public including malicious journalists".

Books do furnish a diary, and one constantly interesting theme in this one is Powell's comments on his reading. He goes through Shakespeare, and notices that Fluellen, laying down the law on military matters in *Henry V*, "is exactly like Horace Probert, my Company Commander in the 1/5th Welch". He wonders if Lewis Carroll's King of Hearts, replying to the Mad Hatter's "I'm a poor man" with "You're certainly a very poor speaker", was not inspired by Parolles, in *All's Well That Ends Well*, saying he is a poor man and a courtier observing that he is a "naughty orator".

He rereads Lawrence's *Women in Love*. It reminds him that the wife of Boris Christov, the real-life original of Lawrence's *Libidnikov*, once worked in a bookshop, and when she was asked "Have you a copy of *Prometheus Unbound*?" replied "No, but I'm almost sure I've seen a bound copy on the shelves."

On contemporary writers he tends to be rather lazi — a trace, perhaps, of the vinegar of rivalry. That is not to be found in Nick — but, after all, there is a touch of Widmerpool in everyone. The tartness is better used in his attack on two television programmes, one on Evelyn Waugh, one on *Writers and the War*, for which he had been interviewed. His comments reflect exactly what Matthew Parris was saying in *The Spectator* last week: documentary is simply "plays written by the producer, those who appear in them actors who speak the lines, which are cut, if not what producer wants".

In the end, though, it is something more than all these delectable items that makes these diaries such an alluring read: Powell's day-to-day life just draws one into its rhythm. You get concerned about



From literary lunches to dentistry, Anthony Powell is a writer able to convey the alluring rhythm of day-to-day life: the author at home in Somerset, 1985

Too many cooks poison the soup

The defeat of Margaret Thatcher as Prime Minister in 1990 has already become the subject of some self-justifying memoirs, not least from the lady herself. Philip Hensher's intriguing, if inchoate, second novel offers an alternative viewpoint: that of a House of Commons clerk, a post occupied by three of the novel's protagonists, John, Henry and Louis and, until recently, by the author himself.

This below-stairs view of great events offers fascinating detail about the workings of the Commons: its labyrinthine corridors, arcane customs and mundane procedures. Its portrait of the relationship between clerks and MPs neatly complements that between civil servants and ministers, familiar from *Yes Minister*. What it does not do is offer any new insight into the drama's central figure. The description of the Prime Minister listening to Geoffrey Howe's resignation speech, or of Louis encountering her in the division lobby contains nothing beyond the popular image of her ferocious self-confidence and regal sex appeal.

This, in turn, relates to the broader problem of the narrative voice. Although the bulk of the book is written in the third person, a stray reference to "the beauty of women like, and unlike, me" can hardly be a reference to the bearded portrait on the jacket. At times — notably at the beginning and end — the narrator appears to be Mrs Thatcher. A dream is described in which she reads

the word "omniscient". And yet the idea of the Prime Minister as an all-knowing narrator remains no more than a literary conceit. Even were she privy to the goings-on in rent-boys' bedrooms, it is unlikely that she would describe them in such detail and with such sympathy. Nor does it seem credible that Mrs Thatcher's speculations on the aetiology of homosexuality ever centred on the films of Douglas Sirk.

The confusion extends to the fictional time of writing (it appears to be ten years in the future) and to the prose style. This is a mixture of the impersonality of parliamentary reports, the cadences of the *Authorised Version* of the Bible ("At this time there was an attempt to write down the words of men, and it was called Hansard") and the flip dismissal of camp ("The next day the House was recalled; there was a war or something.") Far more successful is the dialogue, which is sharp and genuinely quirky, particularly as spoken by John's two daughters, Francesca and Jane.

The familial eccentricity recalls the work of Ivy Compton-Burnett just as the political milieu inevitably does Trollope (significantly, these are two authors to whom reference is made in the text). Although Hensher fails to synthesise them or, indeed, to link political and domestic venom on any but a basic level, it is his portrait of sibling rivalry that carries the sharpest sting.



SATURDAY BOOKS
Tunku Varadarajan on the memoirs of Phoolan Devi, left, India's 'Bandit Queen'. Plus: Elizabeth Buchan on Joanna Trollope's latest novel, *Next of Kin*

The perils of impersonation

Alan Isler's first novel, *The Prince of West End Avenue*, was a comic set-piece, located in a Manhattan residential home for elderly Jews. Once set up, it could almost have written itself; a mark not of a deficiency of literary imagination, but rather of its author's almost mathematical understanding of it. Isler was until recently an English professor in America, and it shows. Having started his own literary career late in life, his fictional voice is tempered by an academic's supraconsciousness which exerts an occasionally suffocating control over the proceedings.

Kraven Images returns to the themes Isler staked out in his first novel: the comedy of institutions (this time an American university), sex, superannuation and the psychological darkness of the diaspora generation. This last is deeply felt; but where Saul Bellow permits the plot of the Holocaust to proceed with fatal stealth through the arteries of a novel, Isler tries vainly to apprehend it.

The tidiness of his fiction is essentially in conflict with this great stain: its light-heartedness rejects, almost viscerally, the graft of horror. Isler in fact has much more in common

Rachel Cusk

KRAVEN IMAGES
By Alan Isler
Cape, £14.99

with David Lodge than with Bellow, with whom he is fated superficially to be compared. The risqué erudition, the unperturbed masculinity, the playfulness bordering on farce, are here shot through with glimpses of a more troubled sensibility.

Kraven Images probes, amid the contrivances of a comic plot, some of what are ostensibly Isler's own experiences: a wartime childhood spent in England, a move as a young man to American academia, a return many years later to settle in London. Into these wanderings is introduced the notion of impersonation, in the form of Nicholas Kraven and his ne'er-do-well cousin Marko. Nicholas, a clever boy of slender means, is impetuously by his idle, richer cousin to sit his exams for him, in exchange for the promise of funds to go to university. When Marko reneges and instead goes to university himself, Nicholas continues to



Isler: a troubled sensibility

the success of others. He is also selfish, dishonest and cruel, having apparently taken on more than one aspect of Marko's identity. This is Isler's way of showing how easy it is to become someone you never set out to be; and how, too, the émigré can incur the loss not just of a sense of place, but of family, morality and self.

With nothing to shore him up, Nicholas's craven instincts flourish unchecked. He maintains an affair with his neighbour's wife, tries to seduce a young student and passes off another student's discoveries as his own, all the while compiling a volume of his own burlesque verse amusingly entitled *Ticket-Boo*. Things come, naturally enough, to a head and he is forced to return to England, there to face his inevitable demons.

Isler evidently likes a grand finale, but it takes a brave man to end a novel with his anti-hero sitting weeping at the completion of his own rite of passage. There is another, better book beneath the surface of *Kraven Images*, one which might make its readers weep instead: and should he ever tire of his love of the fantastical, Isler will undoubtedly write it.

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Early test for Italian leaders

In the past few years, the great Italian cities have been almost submerged under a tide of tourists. Groups of Japanese, Americans, Germans, British, French and, increasingly, Russians shuffle after their guides — brightly coloured umbrellas held high — around the sites of Rome, Florence and Venice.



The Travel Business
HARVEY ELLIOTT

Around them surge milling masses of teenagers from continental Europe. Together they are an almost intolerable burden on cities which have withstood the ravages of centuries. The Italians have, perhaps, allowed themselves to become rather blasé about their historical monuments. Whether it is the Duomo in Florence or the Colosseum in Rome, there are unmistakable signs that successive governments have spent too little keeping them in the best of condition.

In the centre of Rome, for example, is one of the world's most ancient sports arenas, the Circo Massimo — where chariots used to race nearly 2,000 years ago — is now unkempt and litter-strewn. Archaeologically important ruins stand neglected and surrounded by an ugly fence.

It does not require a town-planning expert to see how the circus could be linked to the Colosseum, the Palatine and the Forum in one cultural area. It would need to be a well-kept, signposted site free from coaches.

Italy is experiencing a surge in tourism beyond its wildest expectations. You cannot blame tour operators for meeting that demand and for obtaining the best possible deals. Thomson, for example, charges British holidaymakers £589 a person for an eight-day trip to Rome and Florence, staying in four-star hotels and including flights, transfers and breakfast. At the cheaper end, a three-day break in Rome is advertised in Thomson's City Breaks brochure for £219.

Russians pay less, and the swirling crowds of teenagers less still. Is it any wonder the world is beating a path to Rome and other Italian cities when such bargains are available?

The question confronting the new Italian Government is how visitors can be both welcomed and controlled. It will be pressed to find a way during the European Union summit in Florence in June, when buildings now being cleaned should be free of their scaffolds and shrouds.

The world of tourism will be hoping that the newly elected leaders will have the wisdom and the cash to do the right thing.

Bargains of the week — from trips abroad and round Britain to special deals on hotels, ferries and flights

HOLIDAYS

SPECIAL offers to Turkey this week include a week's bed and breakfast in Fethiye and return flights from £240 per person from Accommodation Overseas. Departures on May 3 and 10. Details: 0181-977 2984.

A ROOM-ONLY arrangement for a week in Turkey is available for even less, £149, from Page & Moy, with flights from Gatwick on May 7. Details: 0116-250 7116.

WATERCOLOUR painting holidays in May, led by respected artists, are available to European destinations from Simply Travel and include a fortnight in Turkey from May 5 for £785 per person including half-board and flights. Details: 0181-995 3383.

BULB-FIELD breaks to Amsterdam from £219 per person are being offered by Crystal Cities until May 22. Prices include return flights from Heathrow, two nights B&B and a visit to Keukenhof Gardens. Details: 0181-390 9900.

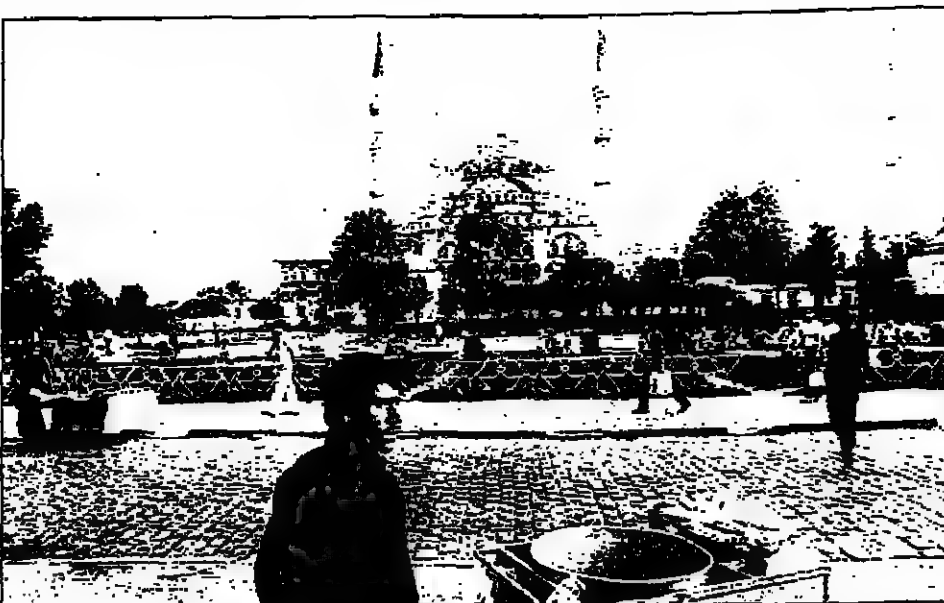
A FREE hire car with every villa booked during May and early June is being offered by Club Pollensa Holidays, which specialises in private accommodation in the north of Mallorca. Weekly villa rentals start from £335 in May. Details: 01903 230128.

HARLEQUIN Worldwide Travel is offering £100 off holidays to Spice Island Inn, Grenada, for midweek departures from May 1 to July 19. A suite for a week with half-board and flights costs £1,026 per person. Details: 01708 852780.

GOA for a fortnight for £339 per person is available from Advantage Travel Centres with a flight from Gatwick on May 2 and room-only accommodation. Details: 0171-323 3408.

TWO weeks for the price of one at a beach resort in Kenya is on offer from Somak Holidays with prices for half-board starting at £399 per person. The offer lasts from May 5 to 26 with flights from Gatwick to Mombasa. Details: 0181-423 3000.

MALTA Direct Travel is offering a week's bed and breakfast at the Continental Hotel, Msida, and return flights from Gatwick for £199 per person, a £40 saving, with departures on May 6 and 13. Details: 0181-785 3233.



Road to Istanbul: late bargains to Turkey are among the special deals this week

FLIGHTS

ALITALIA is launching a new daily service to Florence from Gatwick on May 1 with introductory fares of £175 for economy and £415 for business class. Details: 0171-602 7111.

IBERIA Airlines has a new fare for those wanting to combine a visit to Barcelona or Madrid with a resort holiday. A round trip from London or Manchester to Ibiza and Madrid starts from £209. Details: 0171-830 0011.

MEMBERS of British Airways Executive Club can receive discounts of up to 30 per cent on excursion fares to all destinations. Bookings must be made by May 17 for outbound travel before June 15. Details: 01793 542114.

QANTAS and British Airways are charging from £699 for peak season travel to Australia. To qualify, you must book before May 15 and travel on selected dates between November and March. Details: 0345 222111.

DISCOUNTED Virgin Atlantic transatlantic tickets are being marketed by Travel Warehouse. Depart before April 30 and a return trip to New York costs £195 and San Francisco £240. Details: 0171-414 8808.

FERRIES

HOVERSPED is selling peak-season departures through a broker, Eurodrive, at up to 60 per cent off brochure prices. A £129 fare is quoted on Dover-Calais, £99 on Folkestone-Boulogne for travel until October 31. All fares apply to a car and up to five passengers. Details: 0181-324 4000.

SEA FRANCE has rushed in a £40 fare for Dover-Calais five-day returns during April, valid for a car and up to nine passengers. Book 48 hours in advance. Details: 01304 204204.

P&O European Ferries is offering day trips throughout the year for £19 per car plus £4 per passenger on Dover-Calais (£29 on Saturdays). Details: 0990 980980.

STENA Line has short-stay offers until May 22 on all its routes, including Fishguard-Rosslare for £94 for a car and five passengers. Details: 0990 707070.

SWANSEA Cork Ferries is promoting three festivals for seafood lovers during May with special fares across the Irish Sea. Fares start at £135 for weekend returns, £149 for mid-week fares. Details: 01792 456116.

HOTELS

LEARN to drive in a weekend at the Blackwell Grange Hotel in Darlington. For £224 a person, you get two nights' half-board, up to 12 hours of qualified instruction and discounts on further lessons if needed. Details: 01325 509955.

AUDLEYS Wood, a Grade II-listed country house hotel on the edge of the Hampshire Downs, is holding a series of murder mystery weekends hosted by a former police detective using real-life detection methods. Price is £155 a person for two nights, including meals and wine at dinner. Details: 01256 817555.

STAY FOR two weeks and pay for one at the Round Hill resort on Jamaica's north coast for £950 per person including flights and transfers. Details from Elegant Resorts: 01244 978888.

VISIT Stapley Water Gardens, which claim to be the world's largest water gardens with more than an acre of tropical pond, when staying on a weekend break at the Stoke-on-Trent Most House. Price is £55 per person for one night's accommodation, half-board, including entry to Stapley. Details: 01822 609988.

THE RITZ Hotel restaurant reopens tomorrow after extensive refurbishment. A new three-course lunch costs £28 per person. Details: 0171-493 8181.

BAGPIPE lessons and a guide to enjoying more than 60 whiskies are some of the activities on offer at Perthshire's premier country house hotel, Kinnaird. Room rates start at £200 a night, including full Scottish breakfast. Details: 01796 482440.

HARTWELL House near Aylesbury, part of the Historic House Hotels consortium, is offering two-day summer breaks starting this Sunday until October 13. Price is £117 per person per night, including dinner and entry to nearby Blenheim Palace or other local historic properties. Details: 01296 747444.

HIGHBULLEN Hotel in north Devon is offering residential fishing courses for beginners and those with more experience from £52.50 to £90 per person per night, including dinner. A 10 per cent discount applies for stays of four nights or more until the end of May. Details: 01769 540561.

CHECK-IN

BEST OFFERS!

Best Premium Class Offers from America

Destination	Class	Price
Los Angeles	First	£280
San Francisco	First	£280
San Diego	First	£280
Phoenix	First	£280
Las Vegas	First	£280
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France cuts prices to lure British

By Tony Dawe and Steve Keenan

CROSS-CHANNEL ferry companies are discounting their fares, camping operators to France are cutting prices and Parisian hotels are offering special rates as the travel industry strives to combat the continuing decline in British visitors to France.

Industry leaders hope that the special offers will draw Britons across the Channel despite the poor exchange rate and prospects of another hot summer at home. They accept, however, that many will continue to delay booking in the hope of better deals.

Many tour operators to France are reporting a drop of 30 per cent in bookings this year after a flat 1995, when nine million Britons visited France. But some sections of the industry have noticed a slight upturn in interest. P&O European Ferries says its ships carried more cars on the Dover-Calais service this Easter than last and that this month's bookings for summer have risen. Ian Todd of P&O says: "We are now forecasting only an 8 per cent drop in business on the cross-Channel routes this year, which will be a good result, considering the turn of the tide."

P&O and Stena are offering discounts on brochure prices this summer and tour operators are seizing on them to promote cut-price deals.

French Country Camping

this week reduced prices by up to 38 per cent, making two weeks' camping in Aquitaine from May 17 available for a family of six for £185, compared with £298 in its brochure. The company is also reducing the number of sites available. Mark Hammerton, its managing director, says: "In the past few weeks we have seen an upturn, but it is not going to be a good year."

Sunsites has also reduced prices by up to 25 per cent in high season, cutting the cost of a two-week mobile-home holiday from £1,400 in August to £1,046. And Canvas Holidays is also offering £300 off packages booked by May 31.

Paris hotels also started a big marketing campaign this week, including tactical price promotions, as occupancy in the first two months of the year fell to 56 per cent, from 61 per cent for the same period last year. Some 131 hotels have joined with Utell International, the reservations agency, in the promotion, which will last throughout the year, including the summer.

Elizabeth Powell, of the French Tourist Office in London, says: "We are still looking at a 15 to 20 per cent fall in our business this year. Short breaks are doing well but people are not committing themselves to booking summer holidays."

Threat to airline loyalty schemes

By Harvey Elliott

FREQUENT-FLYER loyalty programmes, which enable many business travellers to take free holiday flights, could be phased out, a leading travel academic said this week.

As more airlines set up their own schemes, so the value of the programmes in attracting new business is diminished, says Allan Beaver, a lecturer at Surrey University who carried out an extensive survey of frequent-flyer schemes.

He says: "The FFP (frequent flyer programme) phenomenon could collapse just as quickly as the trading stamps era passed in the UK."

There are now more than 120 million members of 80 FFPs around the world with many belonging to several schemes, he says in the new issue of the academic publication *Tourism Economics*.

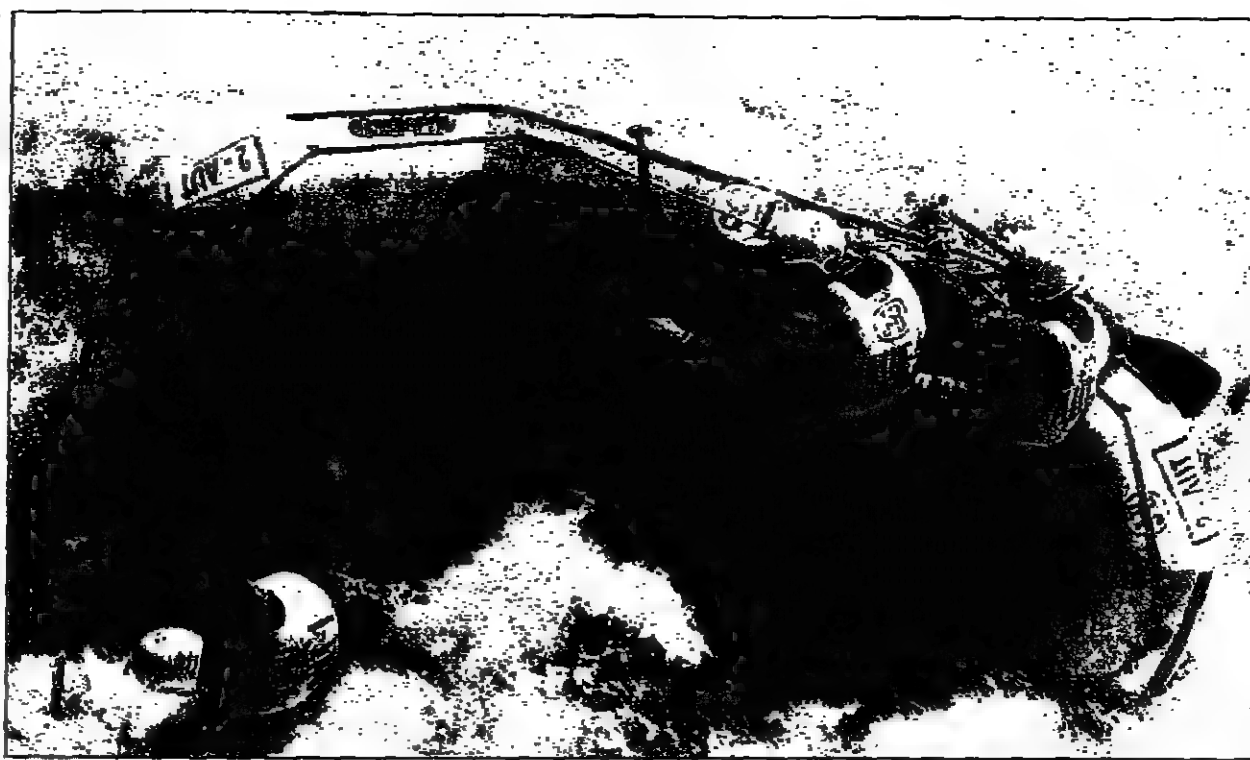
In America, where frequent-flyer programmes are particu-

larly popular, some flights are full for months ahead in the summer, particularly to resorts such as Hawaii.

"Only half of European business travellers have redeemed their awards," he says, "although 97 per cent state that they intend to at some time in the future."

Even the most senior management in international airlines now admit that FFPs are likely to diminish in the future, with 94 per cent of those surveyed agreeing that airlines would gradually increase the emphasis on service "until a point is reached where FFPs become indistinguishable from airline clubs".

Up to 10 per cent of passengers are now travelling free, but as the world moves out of recession and load factors rise, the demand for the seats will exceed the ability of the airlines to supply the free seats.



Whitewater rafting, one of the vigorous holiday activities that lure tourists to out-of-the-way places

Launch of the adventurer's guide

THE growing number of tourists seeking challenging trips in out-of-the-way places will be well served by the launch today of *Adventure Holidays Worldwide*, a guide to 18 activities and 50 countries where energetic breaks can be taken. Tony Dawe writes.

The list ranges from dog-sledding in Greenland with Arctic Experience to whitewater rafting on the Zambezi with

Mountain Travel Sobek. It also reflects the increasing interest in less rugged adventures, which will be highlighted in a speech at today's launch by Derek Moore, the operations director of Explore Worldwide, the largest UK adventure holiday company.

He has spotted a trend towards "soft adventures", such as trekking from hut to hut in northern Scandinavia and driving

from lodge to lodge on safari in Africa, and towards cultural adventures in countries such as Yemen.

James Ogilvie, the guide's author, defines an adventure holiday as "one which contains an element of personal challenge through controlled risk... often in a wilderness or remote area".

© Adventure Holidays Worldwide (In Print, £10.95)

Lunn Poly carries on discounting

By Harvey Elliott

DESPITE a growing shortage of peak summer holidays, Britain's biggest travel agency is to continue to offer an across-the-board 10 per cent discount — the first time such big price cuts have continued after Easter.

However, Lunn Poly, which has 800 shops and a 27 per cent share of the market, is aiming to maintain its lead over its high-street rivals.

Peter Powey, marketing director, said tour operators had drastically reduced the number of holidays on sale this year and there was already a shortage of the best hotels in the school holidays.

"Even, I couldn't get the hotel of my choice in Florida in July," he said. "We believe these discounts will encourage people to book with us, whoever they used last year."

Customers will have the choice of a straight 10 per cent discount on any holiday, plus even bigger discounts on selected brochures, free travel insurance or a "book now pay later" instalment scheme.

Tony Bennett, marketing director of Going Places, said he would not be following suit. "We will, however, watch them closely to see how long these discounts can continue."

PINKERTON'S EYE



A MONTHLY column supplied by the worldwide security and detection agency

HIGH RISK

A BOMB has been ruled out as the cause of last Saturday's Delhi hotel collapse, but India is considered a high-risk area. Two groups, Harkat-ul-Mujahideen and the Khalistan Liberation Force, are determined to stop the May elections in Jammu and Kashmir. There have also been ambushes of military and police personnel in north-east India. In Pakistan Islamic fundamentalists last week threatened US Consulate staff. Israel remains high-risk as Hamas reiterates its threat of suicide attacks. Hezbollah, the mainly Shia group, could carry out reprisals for last week's Israeli shelling of a Lebanese refugee camp. The end of the traditional Shia 40-day mourning for those killed coincides with the May 29 Israeli elections, an event that may be targeted by other terrorist groups.

There has been a spate of killings in Manila, making the Philippines high-risk. The West African republic Togo is considered dangerous; security in Lomé, the capital, is deteriorating and visitors are advised not to travel at night. In Peru Shining Path guerrillas have murdered villagers, ambushed police and military patrols and assassinated a community leader.

In Colombia the President has issued an emergency decree allowing the imposition of curfews and military checkpoints in the light of worsening terrorist activity by the National Liberation Army. In Guatemala military and security officials are accused of being involved in the current high level of kidnapping.

EXTREME RISK

SERIOUS unrest in Lebanon continues. In Sri Lanka a new army offensive in the north could result in the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam stepping up terrorist attacks. Earlier this year there was a suicide bomb in Colombo.

Algeria continues to be very dangerous and the Foreign Office issued a warning in early April not to travel there. Liberia is again tense after renewed fighting. Travellers may be in danger of harassment, injury or even death.

© Pinkerton, 01420 544024

SATURDAY TRAVEL

Travel the world again in Weekend Edward Marriott in Papua New Guinea Tom Pocock on how to enjoy Venice Insider's Paris, by Kate Muir Hazel Lassie in Kilvert country Jill Crawshaw's travel tips

Condoms in the mini-bar

By David Churchill

HOTELIERS are belatedly responding to guests' criticisms of the high prices and restricted contents of hotel mini-bars by introducing a wide range of products, including cigarettes, condoms and cameras.

The Mayfair Inter-Continental hotel in central London this week revealed that since it had started to introduce a wider range of goods in its mini-bars, sales had risen by 35 per cent. Stephen Brandman, the hotel's resident manager, says: "What we are offering are the small things that people forget when travelling and that they usually have to go to a shop to buy."

Since introducing the changes last month, the 287-room Mayfair has sold 48 disposable cameras, ten packs of playing cards and 150 packets of cigarettes. The latter are only available in the mini-bars in smoking rooms.

The hotel has also introduced what it describes as the relief pack — although this is due to be renamed the Emergency Pack — containing aspirin, Alka-Seltzer, Bechams Powders, plasters, tampons and condoms. This is priced at £6 and items are not sold separately. More food items

have also been introduced, such as crisps, shortbread and jellybeans, which are also selling well.

The Mayfair is not alone in reviewing the contents of its mini-bars. The management of the new Grosvenor House Crown Club is presently considering what extras to include when its rooms open in the early summer. The Ritz Hotel in Piccadilly is also looking at what it offers in its mini-bars, although Giles Shepherd, the managing director, insists that "we don't want it looking like a village shop".

But not all hoteliers are interested in changing what has proved to be a lucrative money-spinner for them in the past. Profit margins can be between 300 and 400 per cent on some miniature bottles of drink. About 5 per cent of the room revenues come from the mini-bars.

Brown's Hotel and the Savoy both say they have no plans to change their traditional mini-bar contents, nor does the Thistle hotel chain which is London's largest with 28 hotels in the capital. But Thistle revealed that customer demand had led to extra condom machines being installed in some of its hotels.

AUSTRALIA'S BARRIER REEF IS GREAT

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£699*

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* All fares and travel packages offered are valid for travel during November '96, December 01-08 and 24-31, and 20 January to 31 March '97. Price excludes UK and Australian airport and departure taxes.

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This includes a return trip by Le Shuttle for one car, three nights at the three-star Sequoia Lodge, continental breakfast and, best of all, unlimited entry to the Park.

To book this very attractive offer, call us now on the number below.

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Someone you know can't wait to go.
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*Based on two adults and two children (3-11 years old) including sharing a room. Offer is available for three-night packages starting on any of the following dates: May 5-7, 12, 19-21 or June 2-4, 9-11, 16-18. Theme Park tickets can also be purchased independently from The Disney Store, Keith Prowse and participating agencies, at a cost of £25 per adult or £19 per child for Day passes. See No. 102504

LONDON MARATHON

The Times continues its exclusive coverage of the 1996 Flora London Marathon with the names of competitors who finished inside 4 hours, 58 minutes and 52 seconds. Led by Unisys, official suppliers of the race, we reveal names and times of the other runners.

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A high-contrast, black and white photograph of a marathon runner in the foreground, wearing a bib with the number 12181. The runner is surrounded by a large crowd of spectators and other runners in the background, creating a sense of a major sporting event.

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 4:04:19; C. Miller 4:04:19; R. Hanna

Jackson relents on threatened boycott

spirits was evident when he was asked whether victory in Atlanta would confirm him as the greatest sprint hurdler in history. "That's not for me to say, that's for you guys to say," he replied. "But I would like you to say it."

His remedy, rough and ready though it was, was to put the matter, or, at least, the wrist, on ice. He was scheduled to pay a visit to the tour physiotherapy unit and was resigned to another evening with a frozen hand. "It's nothing serious," he said lightly. Would that his younger compatriot could be so sanguine.

Those making their debuts are Lisa Dermott, the Welsh champion, Alison Rose, a Scotland international and a member of the Commonwealth team last year, and the England international Karen Stupples and Elaine Ratcliffe.

Mickie singled out Andy Leatham, 19, for praise. The young prop has established himself in the first team this season due to a prodigious work-rate. "We have the benefit now of an individual [video] taping system via computer and I can't find the last time that Andy made a mistake in a

Britain relegated

Golf: Gordon Sherry, who makes his professional debut in the Italian Open next week, has been allocated a place in the Volvo PGA championship at Wentworth next month. Sherry, 22, ended his amateur career at the Masters a fortnight ago, where he missed the halfway cut.

Untruthful

[illegible]

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

Sour over 'ible' clubs

Rights issue, page 27

Rights issue, page 27

was less than impressed with some other performances. Larsen, with two goals, and Andersen ensured the Scots ended the night empty-handed.

Perkins cannot hide his anguish after failing in the Australian Olympic trials. Photograph: Mark Baker

By CRAIG LORD

Perkins, known as the Ironman of the pool and rated as the leading distance freestyler in the world, finished third behind Daniel Kowalski (3min 50.60sec) and Malcolm Allen (3:51.60), his time of 3:52.52 being almost nine seconds slower.

To add insult to injured Australian pride, Samantha Riley, the world champion at 100 and 200 metres breaststroke, was beaten for the second time in a week. Having already lost the 100 metres to

Riley, 23, tested positive for a stimulant contained in a prescription headache pill given to her by Scott Volkner, her coach, last December. She was let off with a warning, while Volkner is appealing against a two-year suspension from international coaching. She said that had not disturbed her training; her poor form was something of a mystery to her. One commentator at the trials said: "Everyone is online reamed in shock at the results."

BY DAVID HANDS
HIGHY CORRESPONDENT

Bristol welcome back Simon Shaw, the England A lock, who plays for their second XV against Orrell after a leg injury which threatened his playing career. Shaw suffered a double dislocation of the ankle, a fractured fibula and extensive ligament damage playing for Bristol against Transvaal in November.

By Our Sports Staff

ALAN SUGAR has a reputation for being something of a maverick among the men who control football's leading clubs. Thus it was yesterday that the Tottenham Hotspur chairman, at the same time as announcing a new rights issue to build a new £10.9 million to raise the north stand at White Hart Lane, criticised what he called the "irresponsible" spending of his FA Carling Premiership rivals.

Sugar refuses to follow clubs who pay hugely inflated fees or wages for players, and believes that the domestic transfer market has to change as a consequence of the Bosman ruling. To that end, Tottenham have wiped almost £7 million off the transfer value of their players.

At present, normal transfers within Britain command a fee

BY MARK SOLISTER

TONY STANGER and **James Craig** are at opposite ends of their rugby careers. Stanger, who will be 28 next month, is a veteran of 38 international, while Craig, the youngest son of the former Celtic and Scotland football international, **Jim Craig**, is established at under-19 level. The two do, however, have something in common: both are at college. Stanger having given up his job last year to become a mature student reading sports science, while Craig is studying leisure management; yesterday they were the first

initiative designed to assist players to balance the financial demands of further education and the development of their professional and sporting careers, and ultimately to keep them in Scotland. The money has been made available through the SRU's educational trust, set up as an offshoot of the union's careers opportunities for players working party, itself a fledgeling body which has already helped to find a job for Derek Sturt, the former Scot-

As with most things in Scotland, the scheme is the brainchild of Jim Telfer, the SRU's director of rugby, who, as a former headmaster, is aware of the value of education and the importance of parallel careers to rugby, at least in the short term. The trust, which it is hoped will be granted charitable status, wants to raise £50,000 initially to meet expected demand from up to a dozen players over the next three years, while the SRU has contributed another

The need for financial support and career counselling, for instance in liaising with universities in rescheduling exams which clash with tours, emerged from questionnaires completed by players in various national squads last year. □ Peter Wright, the Scotland prop, confirmed yesterday that he will be joining Melrose, the league champions, next season. He is believed to have signed a three-year contract with the club.

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FOR THE RECORD

[illegible]

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Cheltenham drops early fixtures to ease toll on course

BY JULIAN MUSCAT

THE Cheltenham executive has abandoned two fixtures in October amid concern that an early start to the season is taking a heavy toll on the racing surface. The development comes just six days after a Jockey Club report into the equine casualties at the March festival exacerbated the state of the track from any blame.

A group of trainers, headed by David Nicholson, criticised the poor covering of grass at the start of the festival. But, according to the report, they stopped short of suggesting it had contributed to a record ten fatalities last month.

Philip Arkwright, clerk of the course at Cheltenham, maintained yesterday that the decision to reallocate the fixtures was unrelated to the fatalities. "It is not an issue because the report absolved the ground from any blame," he said. However, he accepted that the early October meetings had compromised the quality of the surface.

"To race in early October we have to put serious water on the course up to six weeks in advance," he said. "This is detrimental to good turf husbandry. Our decision is geared towards having the course in the best shape possible for the important [March] part of the season."

Cheltenham has three courses but significant strips of the Park course, which is used in early October, are common to the Old and New courses, which are used at the festival. "Year after year, one realises that one is forcing the

ground - you could almost say abusing it - to get it ready that early," Arkwright said.

The hazards of watering racecourses in the autumn were graphically illustrated at Cheltenham last year. A wet winter, coupled with the extensive watering policy in October, forced the executive to change the Gold Cup course at the eleventh hour.

Runners were ushered around the second-last fence because the going was deemed unfit. "The last two fences of the Gold Cup form part of the Park course, which was heavily watered the previous Octo-

RICHARD EVANS

Nap: MELT THE CLOUDS

(3-40) Beverley

Next best: Mybottle

(3-10) Beverley

ber," Arkwright recalled. "The bad ground was directly attributable to the autumn watering policy."

Conditions before this year's festival could not have made a greater contrast. The lack of winter rain left the subsoil dry, which, according to the report, meant that "hurdles were stiff until they had been jumped once and may have contributed to heavier falls."

For all Cheltenham's efforts to divorce the high equine casualties from yesterday's announcement, its dropping of two early fixtures amounted to tacit recognition that the

ground has not been at its best for the festival. Nothing should be allowed to compromise this showcase event. In that respect, the move is a positive development - albeit one that should have been made after the previous year's controversy.

Controversy also ruled at the Jockey Club disciplinary committee's inquiry into events at Ludlow on April 3. Having dined off a fence when Lawrence Squire lay injured on the landing side, groundsmen started dismantling the warning signs directing riders around the obstacle after Squire was safely loaded into an ambulance.

But they failed to complete the job before the field approached it. In the confusion, West Quay jumped the fence en route to second place but the other runners bypassed it. The result was allowed to stand yesterday even though the committee ruled that the fence should not have been jumped.

Given the committee's decision, West Quay should have been disqualified for a second. That may seem harsh but such measures would go a long way towards avoiding similar shambles in the future. It was a golden opportunity for the Jockey Club to underline that the employment of incompetent groundstaff by racecourses is inexcusable. With that in mind, it was lenient in the extreme that both the Ludlow executive and its clerk of the course, Bob Davies, escaped without censure.

Rural charm of races before graces

FROM ALAN LEE AT PUNCESTOWN

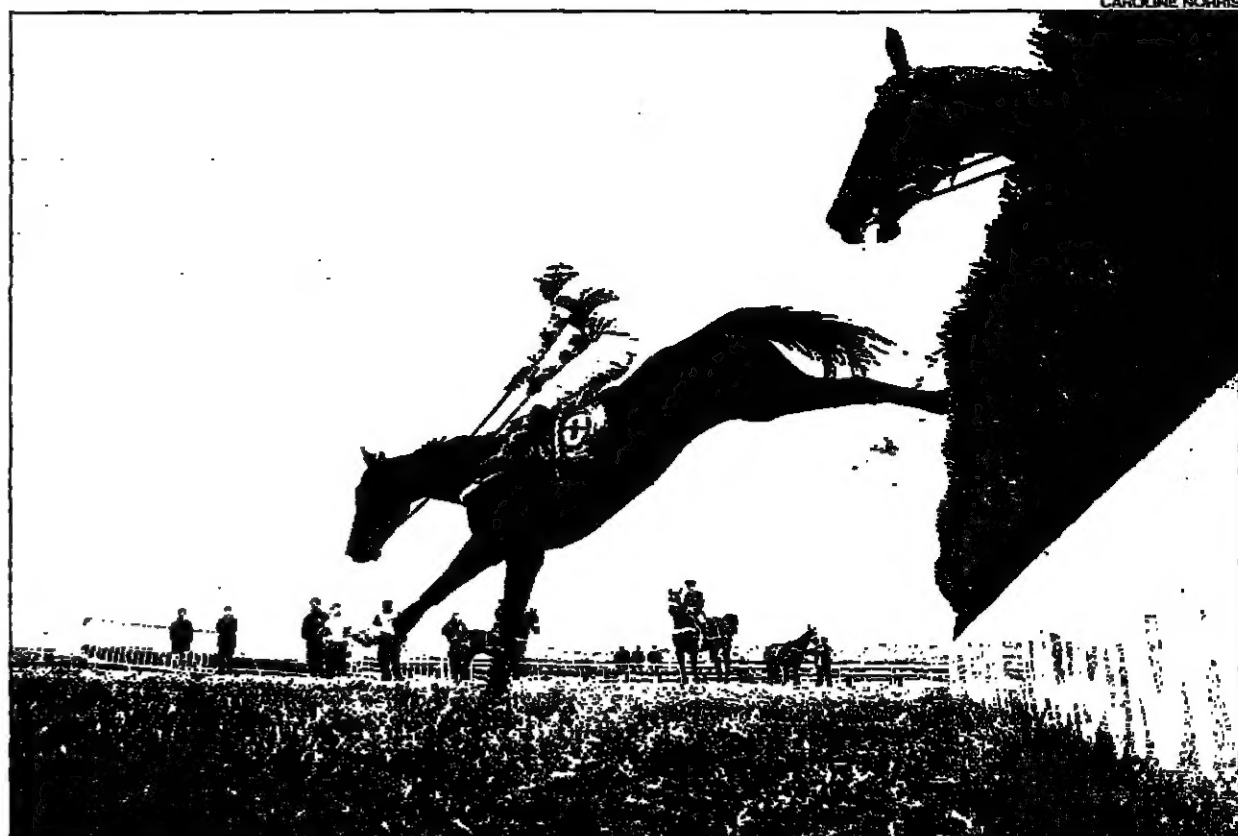
THEY called it Ladies' Day at Puncetown yesterday but nobody seemed to notice. There were a few showy hats and a quorum was raised for the best dressed Lady competition. But any comparison with Ascot and the social season ended there. This is an egalitarian event, where people come to watch rather than to be seen. Proper sport, in fact, and the Irish are rightly proud of it.

Sean Connery was here. So too was Ronnie Wood of the Rolling Stones. Yet they attracted no more attention than the unshaven man with a stick who habitually stands near the parade ring with a handful of assorted bailiffs, calling "boiros" as a half-hearted sales pitch.

A delegation from Cheltenham attended yesterday and Edward Gillespie, the managing director, remarked: "We spent 15 years trying to make Cheltenham like an Irish racecourse and, here, they've spent the last five years trying to be like us."

In some ways, they have succeeded. It is a constantly expanding operation, a stamina test of eight races a day, and there were so many people here yesterday that the usual Cheltenham dilemma of whether to go to the bookmakers or the parade ring was neither time nor space to do all three, was much in evidence.

The racing, too, was of Cheltenham quality - intensely competitive and often unpredictable, although there was something inevitable about Tony McCoy dropping in from his domination of the British season and winning on his first ride of the meeting. This was a sign



Billygoat Gruff clears the last on his way to victory in the Heineken Gold Cup at Puncetown yesterday

of better to come for the away team and in mid-afternoon David Nicholson sent out the first British-trained winner, Billygoat Gruff's length victory over Twin Rainbow in the £60,000 Heineken Gold Cup was no surprise to Nicholson. He reported that the horse, bought as a foal for only £700 by his wife, Dinah, who also named him, was "wrong" when he fell at Cheltenham last time. But the result was gained only after a chaotic race in which five of the 20 runners fell at the fifth fence from home and only seven completed the race.

IL however, the Irish like to think of these three days as their replica of Cheltenham, right down to the rolling hills and the nightly revelries, there are differences which must remain. Puncetown is a big event in a tiny place and it is the country setting and the rustic infrastructure that bestow its charm.

The course buildings are ancient, almost shabby. The judge's box is reached up a rustling spiral staircase and the press box is a portacabin next to the weighing room. Nobody complains because this is rural Ireland. This is how it ought to be.

Certainly, the jockeys want nothing to change. Mark Dwyer, born in Dublin but making his name in England, has been coming here for years and said: "It is second only to the Cheltenham Festival for me, yet much more relaxed. The pressure is not the same. People come for the racing but they are also here to have fun. It's just a wonderful week."

Endorsement came from an unlikely source - the police caravan, where the duty sergeant cheerfully reported that their presence was "a duty rather than a

necessity". There was only one arrest on the first day - a pickpocketing charge - and the sergeant regarded my query about crowd disorder with a look of amused astonishment.

"There are no fights, no trouble here. It is a pleasure to be present. But we do notice the difference between Flat and jumping crowds. The Flat people come and go quickly, but the jumping crowd come early and hang around late." Had he but known it, the sergeant was offering a suitable summary of the appeal of weeks such as this.

BEVERLEY

THUNDERER

2.10 Wee Hope 3.40 Misky Bay
2.10 Monticristo 4.10 Eskimo Nel
3.10 MYBOTTLE (nap) 4.40 Pine Needle

Our Newmarket Correspondent: 3.40 Misky Bay, 4.10 Darling Clover, 4.40 PINE NEEDLE (nap).

GOING: GOOD TO FIRM DRAW: 5F, HIGH NUMBERS BEST

TOTE JACKPOT MEETING SIS

2.10 FULFORD MAIDEN STAKES (£3,795; 5f) (13 runners)

101 (7) AUTUMN (J. J. Gifford) 3-8-0 L. Charnock
102 (3) G. L. G. (J. J. Gifford) 3-8-0 L. Charnock
103 (9) G. L. G. (J. J. Gifford) 3-8-0 L. Charnock
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Slaughter of the innocent

WORLD SERVICE, MW 648; LW
M 100-102, VIRGIN RADIO, FM
UK, MW 1053, 1088, Television
Dear, Ian Hughes, Rosemary



Дружеское

THURSDAY APRIL 25 1996

SNOOKER 46
GRIFFITHS TAKES
POT LUCK IN
DRAMATIC VICTORY

Laudrup brothers torment defence

Scotland make no allowance for family link

Denmark 2
Scotland 0
FROM KEVIN MCCARRA
IN COPENHAGEN

SIBLING rivalry can do terrifying damage. Last night, however, neither of the brothers engaged in it suffered any harm. Instead, the Laudrups, with their attempts to outdo one another in agility of mind and nimbleness of foot, punished Scotland as Denmark won a slick victory in the Parken stadium here.

The visiting team at least possessed the sturdiness of spirit that allowed them to reduce the embarrassment in the second half, but, inadequate in defence and insufficiently accomplished in attack, they have, on the evidence of this defeat, little to look forward to in the European championship finals in June. For the winners of this match, who are the holders, the future looks wholly different.

It is a token of Denmark's resources that the football community here can become irritable when discussing Michael Laudrup, sighing over his supposed failure to nurture the talent he displayed as a teenager. Most countries would cherish a wastrel whose record resembled that of the Real Madrid player.

Before this match, he had scored 34 goals in 36 appearances for Denmark, even though he has, for several

years, been more of a midfield creator than a forward. This game invited him to enhance his ratio since his team, with only one more international, against Ghana, before they begin the defence of the European championship were restless and eager to demonstrate their power.

Laudrup's goal, in the seventh minute, owed more to inept defending than to flair, however. Hendry allowed Beck to sneak into space behind him and, when a ball struck down the Scotland left slipped past the centre half, the Fortuna Kohn player was free to race to the byline.

McMahon's joy 44
Sagar turns sour 44

Beck, whom Rangers have persistently been interested in signing, squared the ball and a faint deflection from McKimmie allowed Laudrup to pivot and stroke the ball home. A loss of concentration had put Denmark in command but Richard Moller Nielsen's team have no need of such inadvertent assistance.

The other Laudrup was soon insisting on taking his turn to torment, squaring, after quarter of an hour, for Beck to hit a drive that Leighton managed to block with a boot. The Laudrups were harassing Scotland like men avenging an ancient wrong done to their family. As

if the quality of the brothers' skills was not alarming enough, those gifts also proved complementary.

Michael loves to pass and Brian delights in striding past defenders. When those arts were combined, in the 27th minute, Scotland fell a further goal behind. The Real Madrid player eased the ball through the middle and his brother ran on to finish in his favoured manner by strolling round the goalkeeper.

Admiration for the swagger with which Scotland were being trounced could not divert the onlooker from troubling over the visiting team's inability to cope with dangers that had been expected. Craig Brown's team has taken a modest pride in denying more flamboyant sides but that knack appears to be deserting them just as the European championship approaches.

The defence, to be fair, was altered a little last night because of the absence of Calderwood and McLaren, both injured, but the replacements were experienced men.

Were it not for their distress, Scotland's followers might have recoiled at the thought that this was a fixture in which their team had hoped to discover an effective pairing in attack. The visiting team were unable to advance frequently enough to carry out the intended experiments.

Given the bleak circumstances, however, Spencer's capacity to catch the eye on occasion merited respect.

He had fashioned Scotland's only chance before the interval, taking McAllister's pass and sliding play on for Gallagher to strike a drive that Schmeichel fended away. A lay-off by Spencer reached McAllister soon afterwards and his drive ran just wide.

This vitality in the later stages said much for Scotland's powers of endurance and also spoke of Denmark's leniency in a game that they had already won handsomely.

DENMARK (3-5-2): P. Schmeichel (Manchester United); M. Laudrup (Brøndby); L. Olsen (Brøndby); J. Rasmussen (Brøndby); P. Nielsen (Landsodet); C. Thomsen (Jensbo); M. Laudrup (Real Madrid); A. Nielsen (Brøndby); B. Nielsen (C8); M. Schmeichel (C8); B. Nielsen (C8); M. Laudrup (Brøndby); M. Beck (Fortuna Köln).
SCOTLAND (3-5-2): L. Leighton (Preston); A. Gordon (Rangers); S. McMahon (Aberdeen); C. Hendry (Blackburn); W. McAllister (Blackburn); R. Mowbray (Blackburn); T. Boyd (Colts); C. Barclay (Colts); G. McAllister (Leeds); S. McCall (Rangers); J. Collins (Colts); T. McInnes (Colts); J. Spencer (Chelsea); A. McCall (Rangers); K. Galloway (Blackburn); D. Jackson (Hibernian).
Referee: J. Wiggall (Holt).



Fleming, the Ireland defender, gets to grips with Hapal, the Czech Republic midfielder player, during the international in Prague yesterday

Kuka makes Irish pay for errors

Czech Republic 2
Ireland 0
FROM PETER BALL
IN PRAGUE

THE Czech Republic finally overcame a below-strength Ireland in the Strahov-Prague Stadium yesterday. Mick McCarthy, the Ireland manager, could, however, take encouragement from his team's performance in his second game in charge until defensive mistakes allowed Kuka two free runs on goal inside eight minutes after the hour.

That left Ireland looking well beaten at the close, but until then a side which began with two new ceps, and had a third added when an injury ended Denis Irwin's participation at the interval, had more than held their own.

Kenny Cunningham, the Wimbledon defender, had an excellent debut, and if Alan Moore, of Middlesbrough, was quieter, the performances of Kennedy and Houghton, at

either end of the age spectrum, gave Ireland plenty of hope. The new system and the new team is beginning to bed in successfully.

"I thought we played very well in the first half," McCarthy said. "We created the better chances before the interval. The Czech ones came from sloppy passes by us rather than their creating anything, but then bad defending cost us the first goal and when we started chasing it, we lost our shape and looked like conceding more, which is what we did. But I could be pleased with the first half."

Ireland might even have led at the interval, Irwin had a strong appeal for a penalty turned down when Latal added a third when an injury ended Denis Irwin's participation at the interval, had more than held their own.

Kenny Cunningham, the Wimbledon defender, had an excellent debut, and if Alan Moore, of Middlesbrough, was quieter, the performances of Kennedy and Houghton, at

was matched by Kouba's save from Houghton at close range as Kennedy's clever pass created the opening.

Czech minds have been on the ice hockey championships in Vienna this week rather than on football, and the sparse crowd did little to inspire their team. Berger broke dangerously from midfield twice, but Cunningham shepherded him away to safety both times.

Alongside Cunningham, Babb was less secure and when Drulak beat him through the middle, Irwin had to come across to make the saving tackle, in the process collecting the kick on the calf which ended his participation. Ireland were having the better of things, an impression confirmed when Repka was booked for a foul on Townsend and again when Kadlec had to block Kennedy's shot after the ball had run loose when Kouba challenged McGrath.

Ireland began the second half in similar vein, but

Babb's mistakes were beginning to increase. Given came to the rescue when he gave the ball away to let in Kuka, but there was no such relief when Babb left Kuka free to collect a return pass from Bejbi before drawing Given and slipping the ball square for Frydek to score.

Daish immediately replaced Babb, but before he had had time to settle down, the second goal arrived. Again it came down the left as Hapal's pass found Kuka running free. Given for once betrayed his youth with an impetuous rush, and Kuka evaded him easily to score.

That was effectively that. Given made a good save to deny the dangerous Berger

and Kerir saw a shot fly narrowly wide, but the last chance fell to Ireland as Moore shot straight at Kouba after being given his first sight of goal by Quinn's header.

CZECH REPUBLIC (3-5-2): P. Kuka (Sparta Prague); M. Hanel (Sparta Prague); K. Kouba (Sparta Prague); M. Kadelec (Sparta Prague); L. Kadelec (Sparta Prague); R. Repka (Sparta Prague); R. Latal (Sparta Prague); P. Hapal (Sparta Prague); S. Berger (Sparta Prague); D. Frydek (Sparta Prague).
IRELAND (3-5-2): S. McMahon (Aberdeen); C. Hendry (Blackburn); W. McAllister (Blackburn); R. Mowbray (Blackburn); T. Boyd (Colts); C. Barclay (Colts); G. McAllister (Leeds); S. McCall (Rangers); J. Collins (Colts); T. McInnes (Colts); J. Spencer (Chelsea); A. McCall (Rangers); K. Galloway (Blackburn); D. Jackson (Hibernian).
Referee: H. Strampe (Germany).

HELLO MR WALDEN

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Lewis convinced he can recapture world title

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

LENNOX LEWIS believes Mike Tyson must face him to legitimise his claim to be the leading heavyweight in the world. Lewis has gone to the courts in his efforts to secure a match against the American and last month a New Jersey judge ruled that he must be the next challenger for the World Boxing Council (WBC) crown.

"I don't believe Tyson can actually say he is the best in the world, yet not fight me," Lewis said. "I believe Tyson is a warrior and would want to take on the challenge."

Lewis had argued that the WBC was ignoring its own 1995 ruling that he should challenge for the title next, having beaten Lionel Butler in a title elimination bout. Instead, the WBC sanctioned Tyson's clash with Frank Bruno last month.

Lewis vowed to compensate British boxing supporters for Bruno's performance against Tyson if he gets the chance to challenge for title. "Tyson just went out there and beat him up," Lewis said of Tyson's third-round victory over his fellow Briton. "Bruno did all that talking, saying he would do this and that, and really he exposed himself and just embarrassed himself. He not only let himself down, but the British public."

Lewis, who hopes the

judge's ruling will stand and force Tyson to make his next defence against him, said that he would knock Tyson down and reclaim the title he held in 1993-94.

"It would be just like Buster Douglas, but I have better tools than Douglas," Lewis said of the man who knocked out Tyson six years ago in the champion's only defeat. "I'll not go in there looking for the knockout, but I have power in both hands. I could do that."

Lewis made his comments during a news conference in New York, held to promote a heavyweight triple-header at Madison Square Garden on May 10.

The Briton, beaten only once in 29 professional bouts,

will meet Ray Mercer, the 1988 Olympic gold medal-winning American, in the second bout on the card.

Evander Holyfield, the former undisputed heavyweight champion, takes on his fellow American, Bobby Czyz, in the featured bout, while the American, Tim Witherspoon, will meet Jorge Gonzalez, of Cuba, in the opening contest.

Michael Moor, of the United States is to take on Axel Schulz, of Germany, for the vacant International Boxing Federation heavyweight (IBF) title on June 22, probably in Berlin.

The final hurdle to the IBF title bout was cleared yesterday when a United States Court of Appeal prevented Frans Botha, the South African, from seeking further injunctions against the Moor-Schulz contest.

A federal court ordered the IBF to strip Botha of the title after he had failed a drugs test for steroids following a controversial victory over Schulz in December to win the title. Moor lost his IBF crown to George Foreman on a tenth-round knockout in 1994.

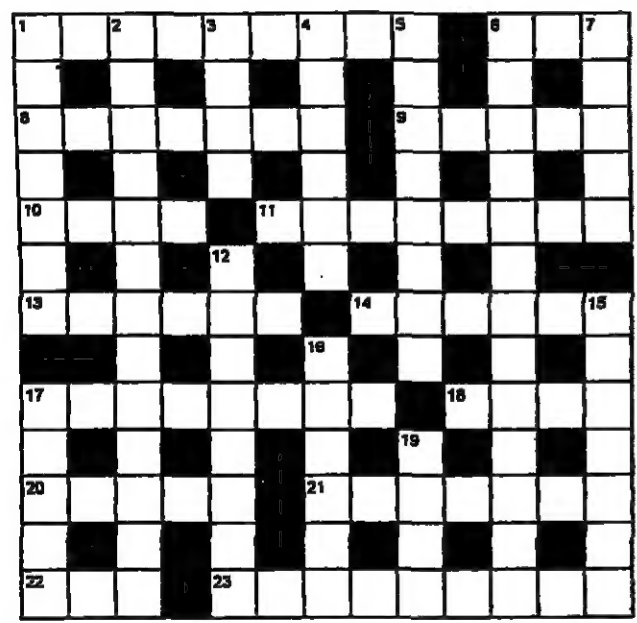
The winner of the Moor-Schulz meeting will be in line to take on Tyson, who is aiming to recapture the undisputed championship.



Lewis: confident

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD

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- ACROSS**
- Petty-minded official (9)
 - Take (exam); pose (for portrait) (3)
 - Chest of money (7)
 - Raptor's claw (5)
 - OT book: — Pound, US poet (4)
 - Showing moral, artistic decline (8)
 - Type of TV comedy series (6)
 - A football team: ringed sort of cross (6)
 - Memento (5)
 - Worry with teeth (4)
 - Bored, no longer impressed (5)
 - Free time (7)
- DOWN**
- (Machinery) vibrates abnormally (7)
 - As an ordinary seaman (6,3,4)
 - Feeble (4)
 - Ship's steering device (6)
 - Trouble (one gets into) (3,5)
 - Eloquent, persuasive (6-7)
 - Item of belief, dogma (5)
 - A Frenchman (8)
 - Cattle-minder (7)
 - US space station (6)
 - Skewered and grilled meat (5)
 - (In) place (of) (4)

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Name/Address

SOLUTION TO NO 764
ACROSS: 1 Rack 3 Macabre 5 Barnock 9 Ton-up
10 Sweep 11 Torpedo 13 Syndicate 17 Resting
19 Coper 20 Tamil 22 Haulage 23 Conform 24 Byre
DOWN: 1 Robust 2 Consensus 3 Make things hum 4 Caier
5 Ban 6 Emptily 7 Coupon 12 Exemplary 14 Accrue
15 Critic 16 Frieze 18 Igloo 21 Man